VERTICAL LIFE

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND'S CLIMBING MAGAZINE

AUTUMN 2023 · ED42 · AU/NZ

INSIDE REEL ROCK 17

ACCIDENTS
MENTAL RECOVERY

CLIMBING
W.A'S SOUTHWEST COAST

NEW GEAR

CELEBRATING
50 YEARS
OF PATAGONIA

9 369998 043613 5
RRP AUS$12.95/NZ$12.9

FEATURING STORIES ON SEB BOUIN IN FRANCE | **KRYSTLE WRIGHT IN MOAB** | TIM MACARTNEY-SNAPE IN THE BLUIES & **ZACHARY BARR IN PALESTINE**

VISIT…

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

Team Athletes:
Jackson Marvell & Matt Cornell

Photo:
Austin Schmitz

SUMMIT
SERIES™

Athlete Tested. Expedition Proven.™
The new Summit Series™ is more than a
layering system, it's living proof. Discover
performance technology built to acclimate to
the world's most challenging conditions.

THE
NORTH
FACE

ARC'TERYX
GORE-TEX PRO

GROW OLD WITH YOUR GEAR.

Enduring performance for the life-long athlete.

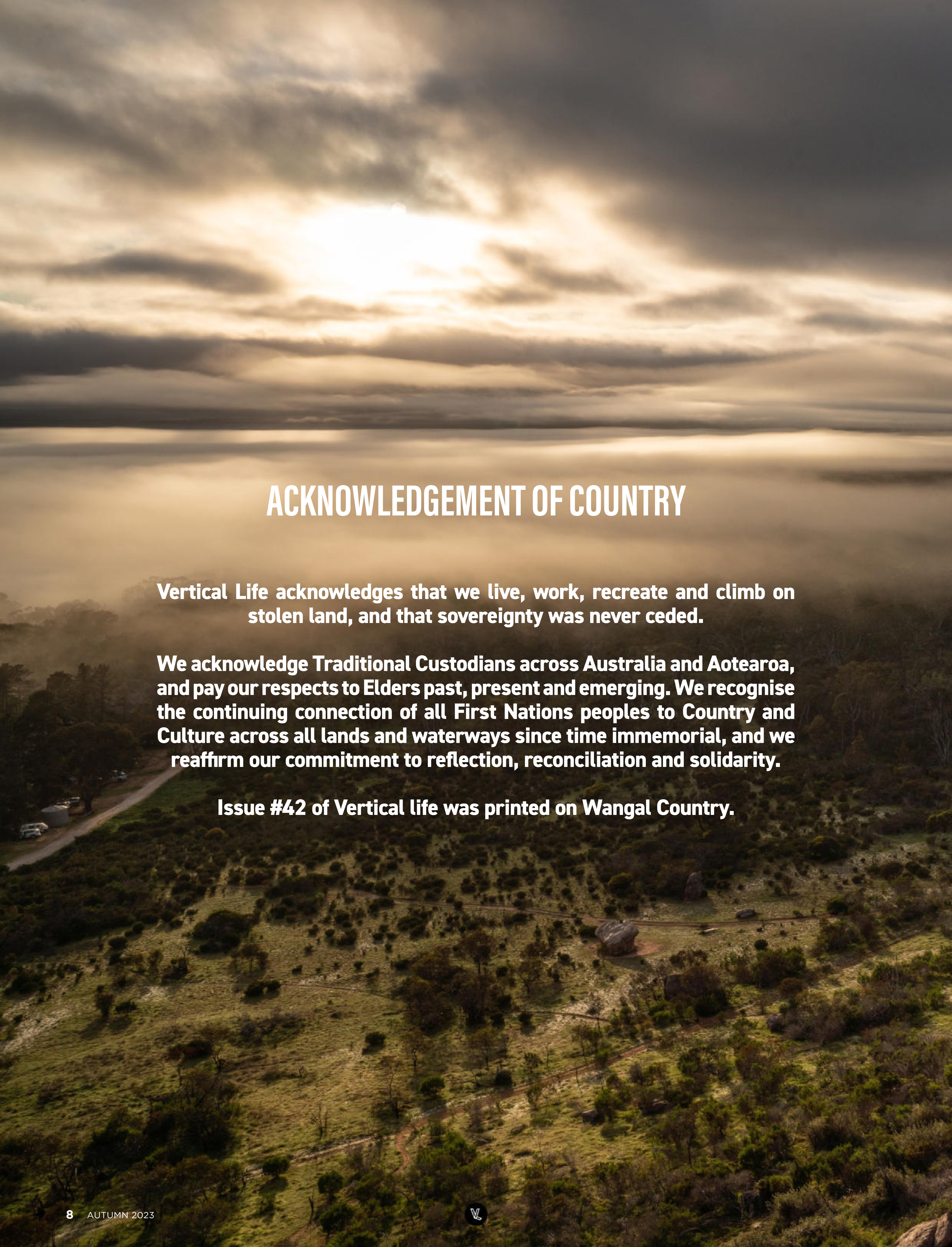
Repair facilities now available in store and online.

ARC'TERYX

ReBIRD™

FOR YOUR MOUNTAIN

LA SPORTIVA®
innovation with passion
WWW.LASPORTIVA.COM.AU



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Vertical Life acknowledges that we live, work, recreate and climb on stolen land, and that sovereignty was never ceded.

We acknowledge Traditional Custodians across Australia and Aotearoa, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise the continuing connection of all First Nations peoples to Country and Culture across all lands and waterways since time immemorial, and we reaffirm our commitment to reflection, reconciliation and solidarity.

Issue #42 of Vertical life was printed on Wangal Country.

HANNAH VASILIADES ON KRYPTONITE CRACK (23) ARAPILES.

VERTICAL LIFE

AUTUMN 2023

VERTICAL LIFE IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY
WINTER/SPRING/SUMMER/**AUTUMN**/
AUSTRALIAN MADE. AUSTRALIAN PRINTED. AUSTRALIAN OWNED.

EDITORS
Coz Fleming
Wendy Bruere
Sule McCraies
Joanne Lee
team@verticallifemag.com

DESIGN
Marine Raynard
KaleaMarineDesigns.com.au

ADVERTISING
Toby Ryston-Pratt
toby@adventureentertainment.com
+61 423 183 804

SENIOR CONTRIBUTORS
Dave Barnes, Simon Bischoff, Max Gordon, Araminta McLennan & Mitchell Scanlan-Bloor.

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Jared Anderson, Dr Kate Baecher, Dave Barnes, Wendy Bruere, Coz Fleming, Louise Shepherd, James Stuart, Krystle Wright, Krish Seewraj, James Stuart, Sidetracked Magazine, Sule McCraies and Araminta McLennan.

PHOTOGRAPHY
Christian Adam, Jared Anderson, Simon Bischoff, Black Diamond, Andrew Butt, Natalie Cheney, Jonathan Fäth, Reel Rock, Barbara Rowell, James Lucas, Patagonia Archives, Mitchell Scanlan-Bloor, Caitlin Schokker, Krish Seewraj, Jeremy Shepherd, Austin Siadak, Krystle Wright.

CREDITS IMAGE
Hannah Vasiliades on Kryptonite Crack (23), Dyurrite/Mount Arapiles. Shot by Simon Bischoff.

CONTENTS IMAGE
Photographer and W.A local Jeremy Sheperd, tells us that climbing at West Cape Howe when the ocean crashes into the imposing dolerite sea cliffs can be deafening and intimidating. Here Rob Burnett cruises up Vulture Street (17)--a 3 star classic for the area.

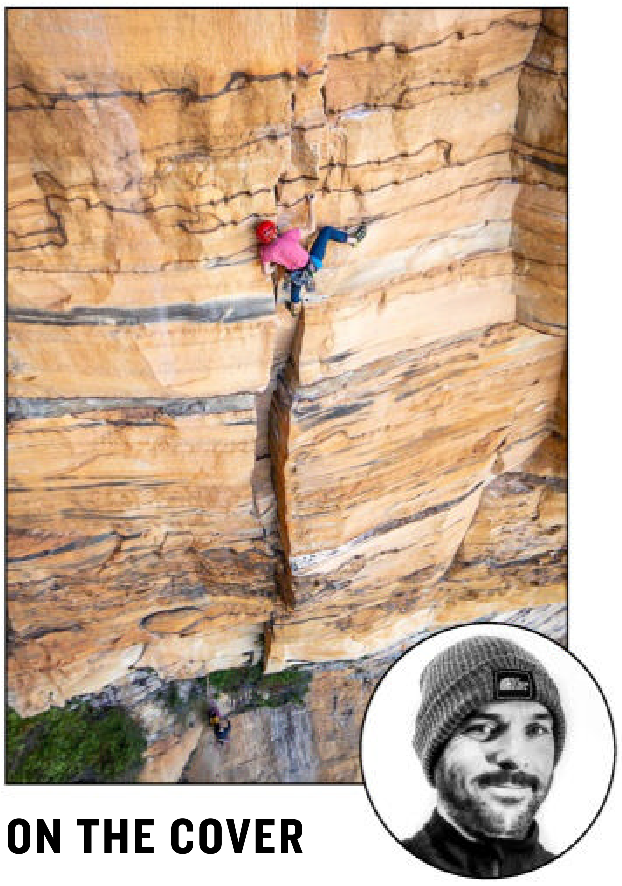
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IMAGE
Sunrise over Dyurrite/Mount Arapiles. Image by Mitchell Scanlan-Bloor.

PUBLISHER
Toby Ryston-Pratt
Founder & CEO
Adventure Entertainment.
ABN: 79 612 294 569

SUBSCRIPTIONS
subscribe.verticallifemag.com
E magazines@adventureentertainment.com
P: 02 8227 6486
PO Box 161, Hornsby, NSW, 1630

COPYRIGHT
The content in this magazine is the intellectual property of Adventure Entertainment Pty Ltd. It must not be copied or reproduced without the permission of the publisher.

DISCLAIMER
Rock climbing and other activities described in this magazine can carry significant risk of injury or death. Undertake outdoor activity only with proper instruction, supervision, equipment and training. The publisher and its servants and agents have taken all reasonable care to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication and the expertise of its writers. Any reader attempting any of the activities described in this publication does so at their own risk. The publisher nor its servants or agents will be held liable for any loss, injury or damage resulting from any attempt to perform any of the activities described in this publication. All descriptive and visual directions are a general guide only and not to be used as a sole source of information. Climb safe ♥



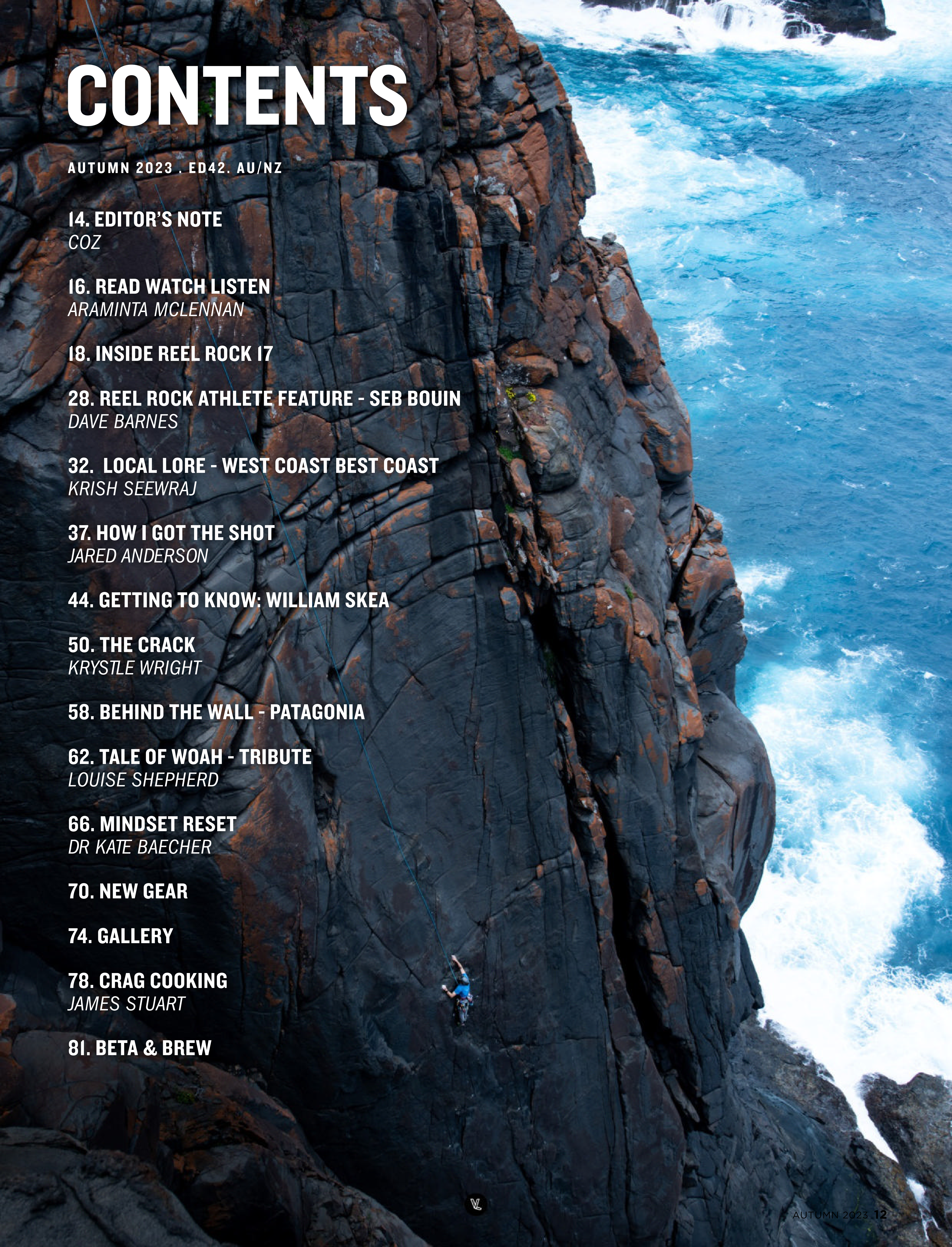
ON THE COVER

Marty Doolan on "Samarkand" (25) Pierces Pass, Blue Mountains, Australia. Shot by Jared Anderson.

"Every now and then you get a days climbing that really stands out and sticks in your mind. Yeah, those days at Bell or Shipley when you send your project are great, but days like this seem to have a deeper sense of enjoyment and gratification. This day was up there with one of the best. Samarkand is truly a Blue Mountains gem. Spectacular views, engaging climbing, comfy belay ledges and consistent crack climbing. Get on it!"

Climber: *Marty Doolan (@marty_doolan)*
Photgrapher: *Jared Anderson (@_jaredanderson_)*

Verticallifemag.com VerticalLifeMag VerticalLifeMag



CONTENTS

AUTUMN 2023 . ED42. AU/NZ

14. EDITOR'S NOTE
COZ

16. READ WATCH LISTEN
ARAMINTA MCLENNAN

18. INSIDE REEL ROCK 17

28. REEL ROCK ATHLETE FEATURE - SEB BOUIN
DAVE BARNES

32. LOCAL LORE - WEST COAST BEST COAST
KRISH SEEWRAJ

37. HOW I GOT THE SHOT
JARED ANDERSON

44. GETTING TO KNOW: WILLIAM SKEA

50. THE CRACK
KRYSTLE WRIGHT

58. BEHIND THE WALL - PATAGONIA

62. TALE OF WOAH - TRIBUTE
LOUISE SHEPHERD

66. MINDSET RESET
DR KATE BAECHER

70. NEW GEAR

74. GALLERY

78. CRAG COOKING
JAMES STUART

81. BETA & BREW

Modern climbers are more accomplished than ever, and we don't just mean on the wall. We've always valued boldness, whether that means having the vision to push highpoints into the unknown or having the audacity to demand more for our home planet. To be a strong climber means full commitment to the sport and to our communities. It means not just working towards futuristic first ascents, but working towards a better future. And we aren't going to get there alone.

Photo: Ken Etzel © 2023 Patagonia, Inc.

Bolder
Together

Mariana Mendoza and Miguel Casar supporting each other on the unceded lands of the Mescalero Apache, Tampachoa, and Ndé Kónitsąąíí Gokíyaa (also known as Hueco Tanks). Climbing is a movement; so is the work to dismantle systems of oppression. Together, Mariana and Miguel work on prison abolition, youth justice and educational rights to build a world where everyone can assert their right to land, joy and life.

patagonia® 50

EDITOR'S NOTE

Pause

COZ HAVING A GOOD TIME ON THE ROOTIN' TOOTIN' BOULDER, MT LYELL QUEENSTOWN [TIMKARIK COUNTRY], LUTRUWITA/TASMANIA.
MITCHELL SCANLAN-BLOOR

As one year ends and another begins, it feels like we enter a sort-of collective twilight zone. No one seems to know what day of the week it is, automated out-of-office emails become frequent flyers in inboxes, and—if you're anything like me—all your climbing is fuelled by Christmas leftovers.

In an attempt to escape the annual deluge of holiday emails and social media feeds flooded with counterfeit contentedness, I deliberately selected my summer climbing crags based on a lack of reception. Given I live in lutruwita/Tasmania, you'd assume that this particular criterion wouldn't narrow the list of crags down in any meaningful way, and while you'd be kind of right (and that's on being with Optus), I found my desperation for seclusion meant that I needed to create some space between myself and the busyness of the islands popular summer crags.
I'd spent the months in the lead-up to summer producing edition #41 of *Vertical Life*, with a focus on Tasmania's summer climbing, so the irony of my deep need to withdraw wasn't lost on me.

With Christmas leftovers in tow and an "if you need me, no you don't" attitude along for the ride, I found myself driving four hours northwest of nipaluna/Hobart to skate* up and down the scree slopes of Queenstown Tasmania's Mt Lyell (timkarik Country). With a landscape shaped by the impact of over a century of mining, and the Iron Blow framing a significant part of the surrounding mountain skyline, it's impossible not to find yourself contemplating your place in the world. The tree-less mountainscape creates a deafening silence when you're alone on the mountain, with laughs echoing down the valley, and power-screams bouncing between neighbouring mountains. Needless to say, the good folk at the Linda Cafe can definitely hear if you've biffed it.

Bouldering with close friends and new friends alike, in a place so far removed from the shackles of social media, helped settle me back into the reflective part of the end-of-year twilight zone; it was shockingly the first real moment I had truly hit *pause* during the year. With this as the backdrop, bouldering felt like a breath of fresh air again, and I found myself noticing the simple pleasures I'd come to take for granted after a decade of climbing. The cold texture of rock brushing against my skin, the familiar crisp sharpness of a pocket's edge under my fingertips, the pure joy of looking at a line and wondering if I'm capable, and the way a friend's face lights up when they reach a highpoint.

This space between time granted me a pause, and that pause transported me back to why I fell in love with climbing in the first place. No routines, no plans, no goals and no ambitions—just me and the simple pleasure of being on the rock.

On this trip I was reminded that the space between the end of one thing and the start of another always offers us a natural moment to pause, we just don't always make the space to take it. If we're talking goals, this *between time* is the perfect opportunity to analyse our strengths and redefine our capabilities. If we're talking failure, this space gives us the opportunity to synthesise what we've learned and adjust our trajectories. When we rush through this time either driven by an eagerness to skip to what's next, or to tell people what we've just done, we miss the opportunity to soak up the learnings and reflect; and it's in this cycle that we eventually stop noticing the simple pleasures that make our experiences so rich.

After experiencing the joys of climbing with new eyes for what feels like the first time in a decade, I left Mt Lyell feeling renewed. Both in my personal relationship with climbing, and in my drive to recreate more moments like this for the climbing community throughout the year. With that in mind, over the break Team VL put the wheels in motion to bring you four incredible issues celebrating all layers of our sport and community.

For our first edition of 2023, we've worked with local legends and global heroes to create the space and opportunity for you to hit *pause*, as their stories and images transport you through their eyes to Western Australia's southwest coast, the Blue Mountains, Dyurrite/Arapiles, France, Moab, Pakistan and Palestine, just to name a few.

Taking us to Moab is Krystle Wright with a poignant reflection on the benefits of boredom in "The Crack", while Jared Anderson gives us plenty of reasons to laugh while he recounts a nightmare scenario he never imagined himself in. We learn what (or who) climbing and cats have in common as we get to know William Skea, and Krish Seewraj gives us the local beta on climbing WA's southwest coast. To fuel the journey, self-proclaimed "satay tragic" James Stuart delivers a better last-day-of-the-trip meal option than the familiar choice between a single tin of tuna or esky water soup for dinner.

As always Louise Shepherd gives us plenty to reflect on in "Tale of Woah" with an important reminder of the gravity rest plays in our safety. Debuting as an extension of our ongoing safety discussions, we introduce our new column "Mindset Reset" by Australian Clinical and Performance Psychologist, Dr Kate Baecher. With a significant gap in the availability of resources for mental training compared to physical training, our team has been quietly plotting behind the scenes to bring these discussions to the spotlight. Kate has over 15 years' experience specialising in the nexus between human behaviour and complex environments, and as a climber herself, she's the perfect person to tackle this topic head-on (pun intended).

Reel Rock 17 hit Australian shores in March and will be making its way across the continent and the ditch to our friends in NZ, over the coming months. To celebrate its annual southerly migration, Wendy caught up with Zachary Barr—essentially Reel Rock's executive producer—to get the beta on each film. On the peripheries of Reel Rock, we deepen our connection to athlete Seb Bouin through Dave Barnes' recount of Seb's ascent of Suprême Jumbo Love (38/5.15b), and what drives Seb to keep making history.

This year screenings are back in gyms, intimate venues and iconic theatres, and back in the hands of our community. We're pumped to revel in the best international climbing films while sharing banter (and beverages!) with all of you.

If you were looking for a sign to slow down and create a reflective pause moment for yourself, then this is it. Grab a coffee, take a seat and enjoy the read.

**I am notoriously uncoordinated, so it would be unfair to call my method of approach or descent on scree "hiking".*

Coz

Coz Fleming *(they/them)*
VL Managing Editor

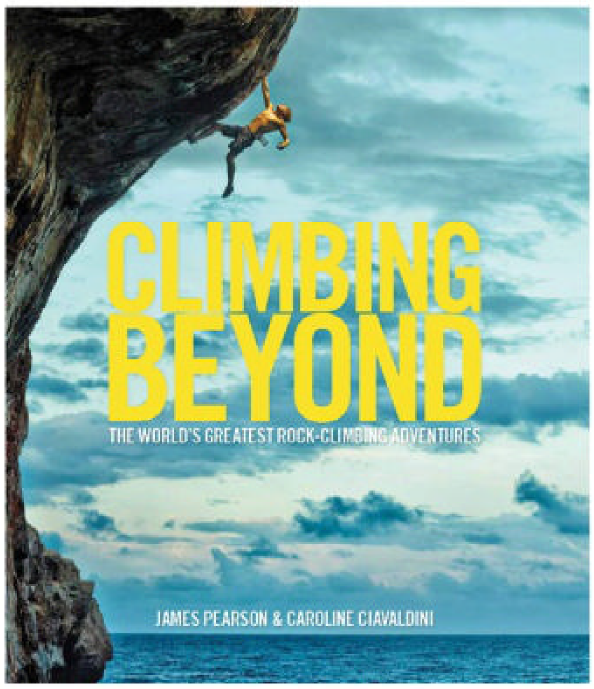
GEAR FOR
HERE
Elliot Kals, Conehead and the Barbiturates (28) The Grotto
Photo Lucas Corroto
Mountain
Equipment
Scan me
& good things
will happen

READ WATCH LISTEN

By Araminta McLennan

Read

CLIMBING BEYOND: THE WORLD'S GREATEST ROCK CLIMBING ADVENTURES BY JAMES PEARSON & CAROLINE CIAVALDINI


CLIMBING BEYOND
THE WORLD'S GREATEST ROCK-CLIMBING ADVENTURES
JAMES PEARSON & CAROLINE CIAVALDINI

The world is a big place, and climbing generally involves working out which big rocks around this big place you want to explore, climb, or question your life choices on. If you're a climber that struggles with decision-making this book is the perfect one to help you plan your next adventure.

Broken into handy bite-sized pieces, *Climbing Beyond* explores countries around the world by climbing region. It's a pastiche of guide book, history book and handy data, such as topo maps. Each region is introduced with a "fact file" covering types of climb, types of rock, grade variation, climb length, best time to climb and notable climbs. What follows can include anything from personal stories by the authors, historical information covering first ascents, the evolution of climbing in the area, route and approach information, geographical data, and more. Authors James Peasron and Caroline Ciavaldini are celebrated climbers and adventurers in their own rights, with both having new lines and first ascents to their names across the world. As this book is built from many of their own experiences you can be confident that the information provided has been climber tested!

The authors, however, note that "this book should not be mistaken for a climbing guide". Rather than using it to dictate exactly how your next adventure should go, use it as inspiration and an informed starting point. As the book was published in 2017, fact checking for updated information or restrictions is worthwhile.

Think of this book like one of those nostalgic *Choose Your Own Adventure* books, with its contents designed to set you on the right track while leaving you to fill in the nitty gritty and make the adventures your own. It feels like a treasure map—but you get to decide what the treasure is!

Each chapter highlights the different appeals and challenges of each region. The authors do a good job of avoiding personal bias. Objectivity is something climbers can lack, but this book offers an unassuming honesty in the way it entices you to explore beyond chasing grades and specific climbs on your tick list.

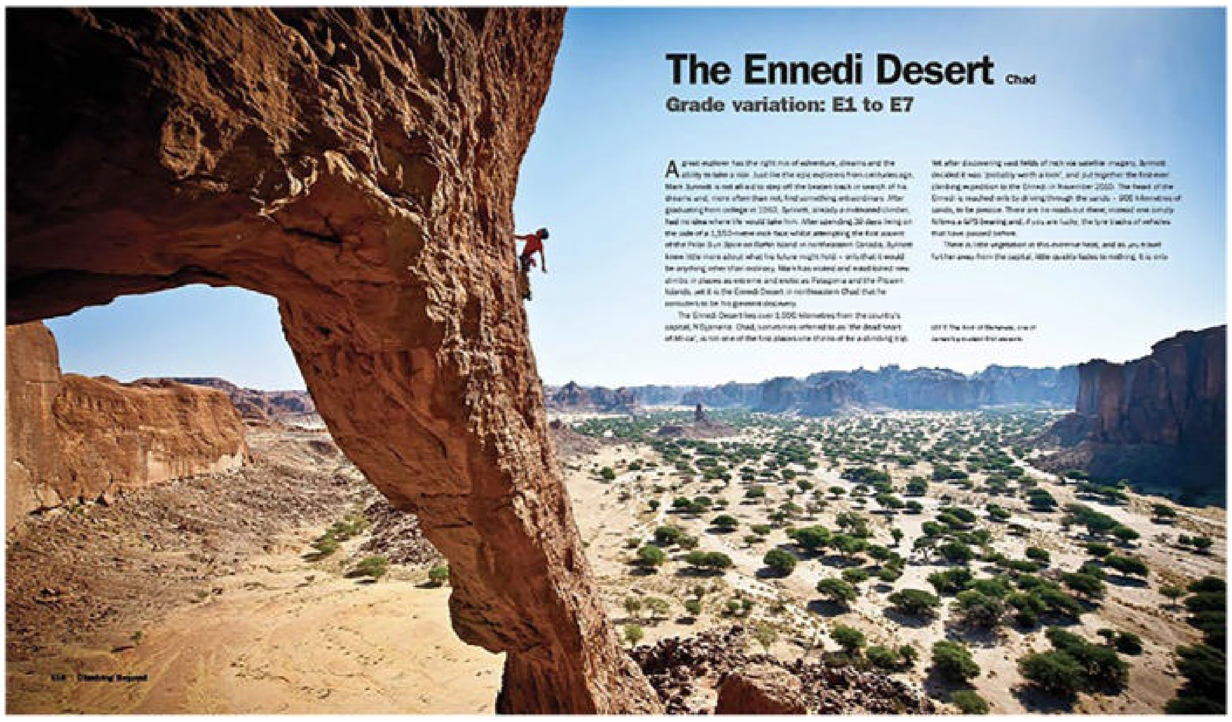
In many ways, the book is as collaborative as climbing itself, using first-hand experience and a thorough understanding of the climbing history to inform the next eager adventurers, but leaving space for personal beta.

The inclusion of historical information adds an extra layer of enjoyment. You can learn anything from the evolution of deep water soloing in Mallorca (giving us modern day Psicobloc) to the geological phenomena that gave us the natural boulder wonders of Fontainebleau. And if the stories don't do it, the spectacular photos are sure to get you over the line.

If you're ready for an adventure but not sure where to start, pick up this book. It pays homage to the weird and wonderful things that make climbers want to climb, and celebrates the spectacular parts of the world we're privileged to explore in the process.

Grab a copy where all good adventure books are sold - adventure-shop.com.au

About the reviewer: ARAMINTA MCLENNAN | *Minty (she/her) is an avid paraclimber living in Naarm (Melbourne) and stands as current Chairperson of Adaptive Climbing Victoria. She's passionate about making space for climbers of all abilities at the crag and in the gym, and when not climbing she is often found pestering strangers to pet their dogs.*

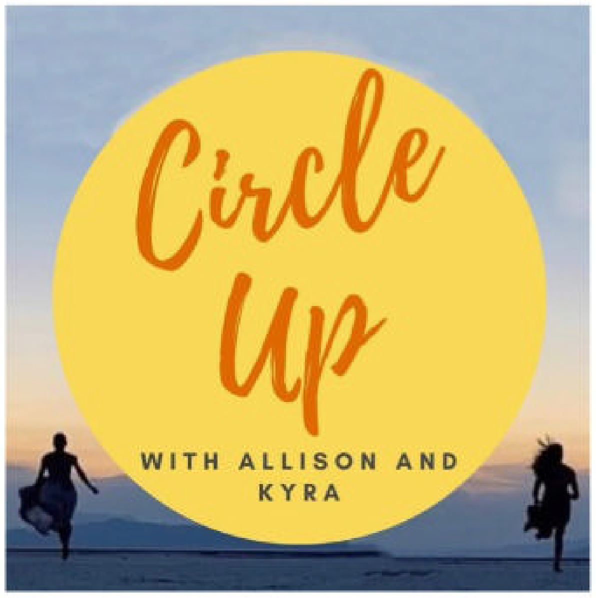


The Ennedi Desert Chad

Grade variation: E1 to E7

Listen

CIRCLE UP! WITH KYRA CONDIE AND ALLISON VEST



Like a light-hearted chat with friends over pre-climb coffees, “Circle Up!” is an engaging new podcast co-created by two of the USA’s strongest professional climbers, Kyra Condie and Allison Vest. Launched in December 2022, the series covers topics relevant to both professional and recreational climbing.

If you think a podcast from these two would only be for competitive climbers, I’d say give it a chance to prove otherwise. Kyra and Allison openly discuss a range of issues including mental health and keeping a good mental space for competitions, ways to keep motivated, body image and nutrition—plenty that would apply to athletes and casual climbers across the board.

Perfect for pre or post (or even during) a training session, the dialogue is open, friendly and honest. Despite their impressive achievements, Kyra and Allison come across as warm and relatable. Their personal stories give insight into professional climbing beyond the competition results. Kyra shares how her spinal fusions have required her to adapt her training, climbing and her approach to boulder problems. Hearing a story as simple as that helped me to connect with her as a person as well as an athlete.

The title references the matching tattoos that Allson and Kyra have, but also the concept of athletes coming together before a game or event to connect, psych each other up and be ready to go out and compete—the classic football huddle . Even this shows just how dedicated these women are to engaging with and supporting the sporting community.

And don’t switch off before the blooper reels at the end—they’re sure to give you giggle.

Check out their first 10 episodes on Spotify.

Watch

ARC’TERYX PRESENTS: OUT ON A LIMB

Ever wondered what it would be like to design the perfect foot (or feet) for climbing?

In the short film *Out on a Limb*, Craig DeMartino—an American climber with a lower limb difference and the first amputee to climb El Cap in under 24 hours—and inventive industrial designer Kai Lin do exactly that.

There’s plenty of comedic content that compares climbers to the fearless mountain goat, but this film takes it a step further. The story follows a partnership between Craig and Kai, who set out on a quest to create the perfect climbing prosthetic.

Typically, prosthetics are created to reflect a specific range of human movement, but these two crazy kids decided to break the mould and create a climbing foot inspired by the stability of the humble mountain goat.

As a parathlete, this reviewer might be biased towards paraclimbing content, but this is truly a testament to the diversity of universal and accessible design—and the creativity that comes with solving problems as a person with a disability.

You’ll see the process from design to test phase (and retest phase, and retest phase, because whoever gets it right the first time?) I watched in fascination as Craig and Kai worked to evolve a typically static prosthetic ankle joint into a mobile, responsive one.

With Craig and Kai never actually having met, but rather introduced by mutual friends, the entire process takes place virtually through video calls, recorded outdoor climbing tests and design reflections. It’s heartwarming to watch the friendship develop alongside the design prototypes.

Produced by Arc’teryx, this movie is one to watch if you’re looking for a little creative inspiration. It’s a welcome reminder that if you can’t find a solution to your problem, you can always try making one.

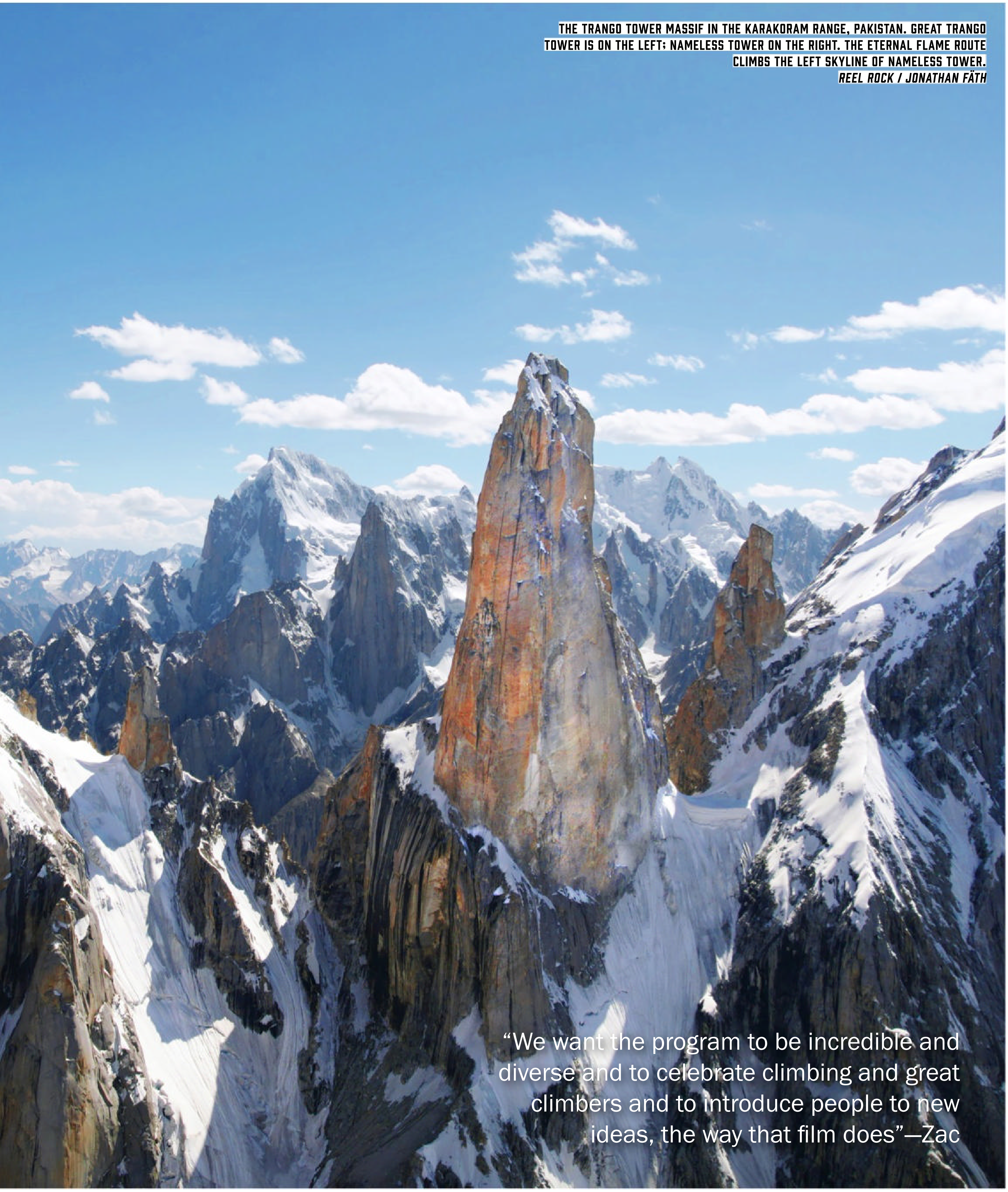
Head to the Arc’teryx Youtube or Vimeo channels for the full film.

INSIDE REEL ROCK 17

VERTICAL LIFE CHATS TO ZACHARY BARR—ESSENTIALLY REEL ROCK'S EXECUTIVE PRODUCER—FOR A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT WHAT MAKES EACH OF THESE FILMS REMARKABLE.

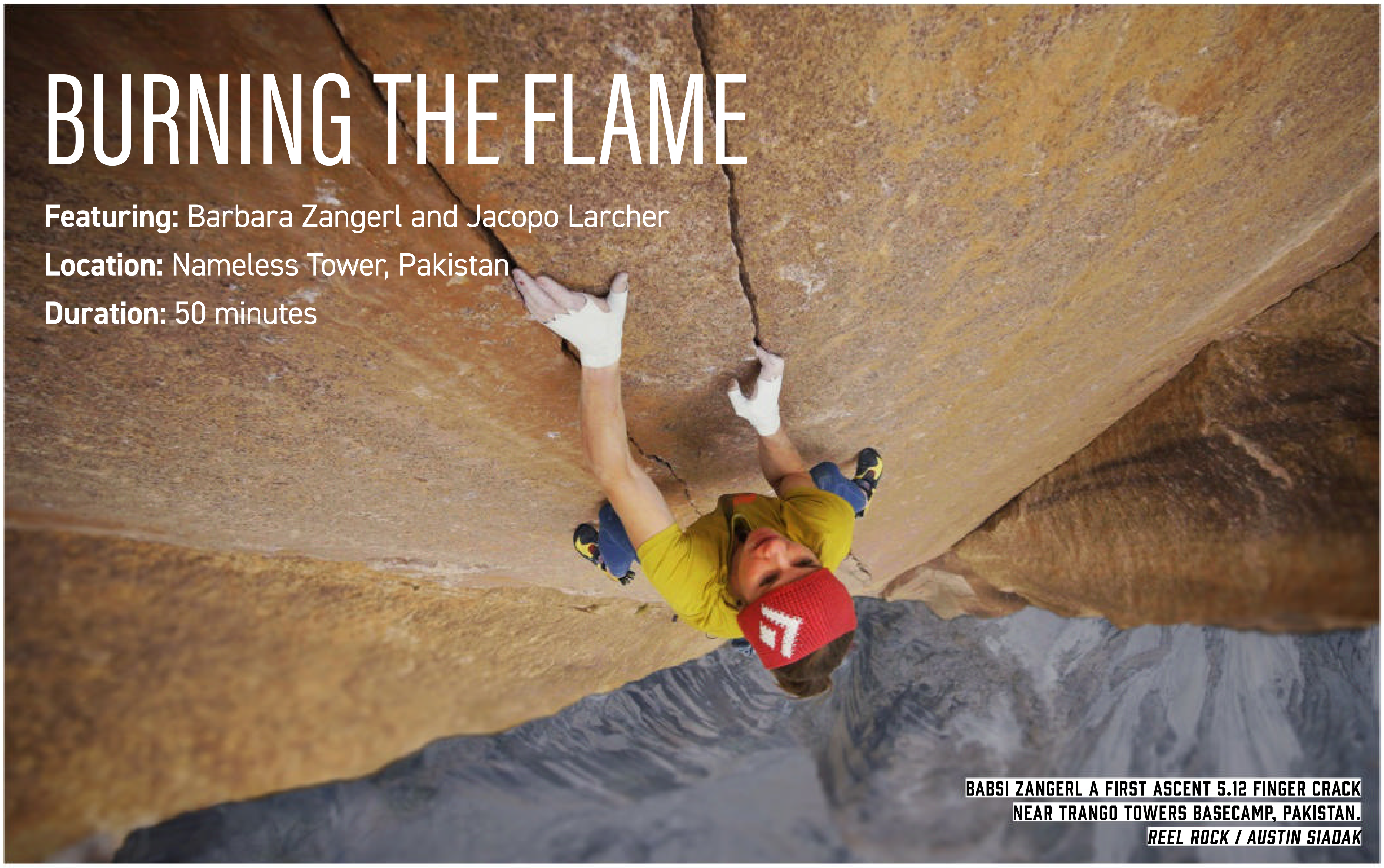
It's time to load up on popcorn and get ready to be awed, inspired, entertained and even educated by the annual offering from Reel Rock.

In its 17th year, the collection of climbing films hits Australian cinemas this March with three new flicks that take us to the epic big walls of Pakistan, showcase Seb Bouin's breathtaking gymnastic moves in France, and explores the deeper meaning climbing has for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.



THE TRANGO TOWER MASSIF IN THE KARAKORAM RANGE, PAKISTAN. GREAT TRANGO TOWER IS ON THE LEFT; NAMELESS TOWER ON THE RIGHT. THE ETERNAL FLAME ROUTE CLIMBS THE LEFT SKYLINE OF NAMELESS TOWER.
REEL ROCK / JONATHAN FÄTH

> “We want the program to be incredible and diverse and to celebrate climbing and great climbers and to introduce people to new ideas, the way that film does”—Zac



BURNING THE FLAME

Featuring: Barbara Zangerl and Jacopo Larcher

Location: Nameless Tower, Pakistan

Duration: 50 minutes

BABSI ZANGERL A FIRST ASCENT 5.12 FINGER CRACK NEAR TRANGO TOWERS BASECAMP, PAKISTAN. *REEL ROCK / AUSTIN SIADAK*

BABSI ZANGERL CLIMBING DOUBLE CRACKS ON THE ETERNAL FLAME ROUTE, NAMELESS TOWER, PAKISTAN. *REEL ROCK / JONATHAN FÄTH*

JACOPO LARCHER CLIMBING ON THE ETERNAL FLAME ROUTE, NAMELESS TOWER, PAKISTAN. *REEL ROCK / AUSTIN SIADAK*

The story profiles two of the world's best climbers, big wall free climbing masters Babsi and Jacopo, as they take on a free ascent of Eternal Flame, an elusive 1,000 metre route up the legendary Nameless Tower in Pakistan's Karakoram range.

"We'd been working on and off on this film for years," said Zac.

"Babsi and Jacopo are both quiet and humble and unassuming. We wanted to make a film that highlighted what phenomenal climbers they are, but also find a way to get to know them a little better."

Reel Rock joined them in Pakistan for a few weeks in 2021, then returned the following year where they caught the short weather window needed for the high altitude ascent.
Using drones and on-mountain cameras in one of the most remarkable places on earth, Reel Rock was able to film their journey up the mountain.

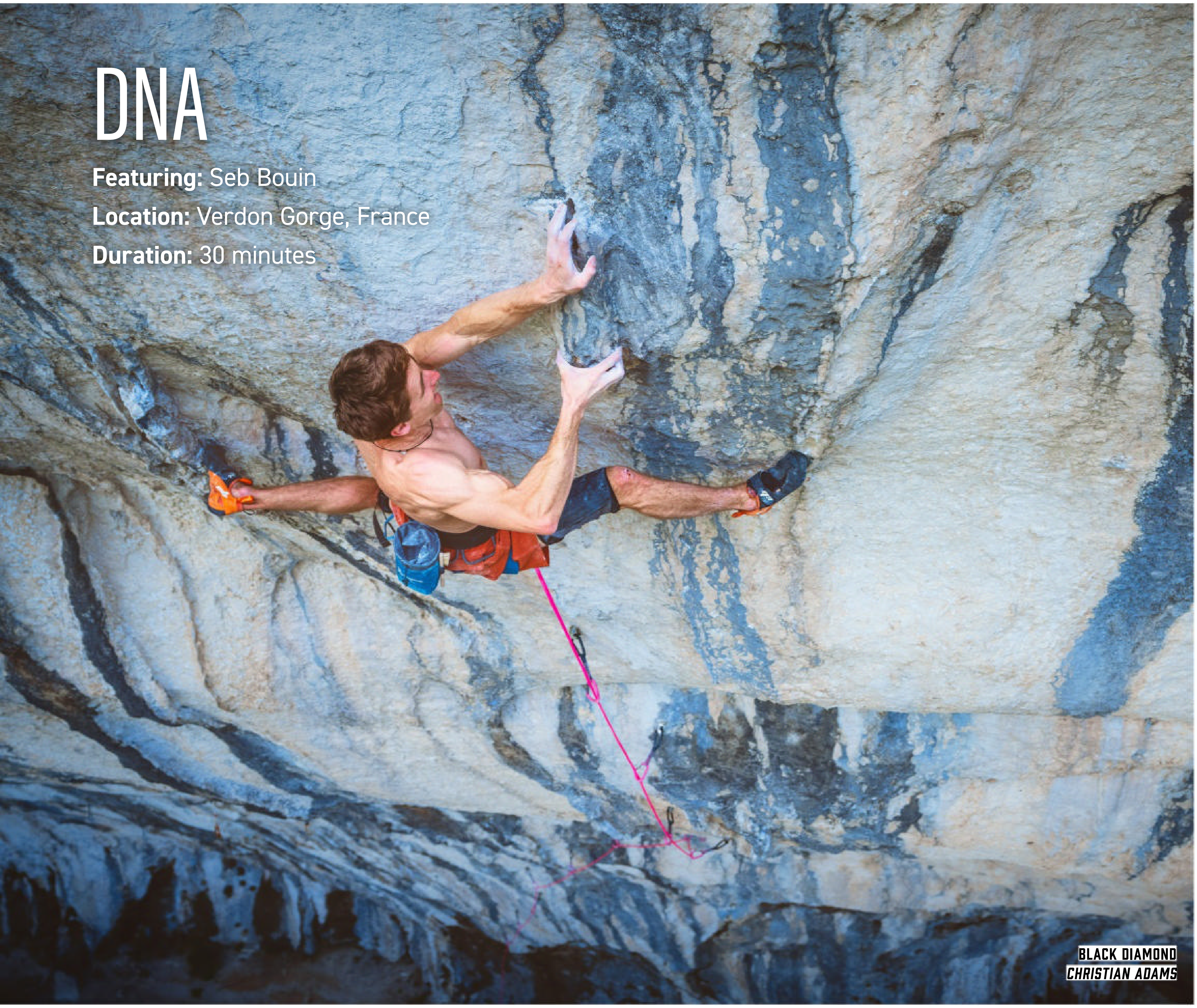
"The imagery for that film is just stunning. A lot of climbers say it's the most beautiful rock climb in the world," said Zac.

"We really get to be with them on the expedition and as they make their way up the mountain. We feel like we get to see it in real time, it unfolds like a sporting event on TV."

And if the breathtaking footage inspires you to visit Pakistan, Zac also noted that it wasn't too hard to get access there as there is a whole industry around trekking and tourism

DNA

Featuring: Seb Bouin
Location: Verdon Gorge, France
Duration: 30 minutes



BLACK DIAMOND
CHRISTIAN ADAMS

The film follows Seb Bouin, a 29-year-old French sport climber, who has been steadily working his way through the grades.

The route he is attempting to establish, DNA, is in an overhanging cave in the Verdon Gorge of France.

"DNA is the story of what is quite possibly the world's hardest rock climb," according to Zac.

"For the last few years that [record has] been held by Adam Ondra for a climb in Norway… it's not a pretty climb, it's just a hard climb—it was a way for Adam to find the hardest possible, weirdest moves," explained Zac.

"The route DNA that Seb did in France is the opposite of that. It's the most beautiful rock, the moves he does are gymnastic, physical and just fascinating. He moves in this very fluid, dynamic, wild modern style."

Over 250 gruelling days, Seb attempts the line again and again. As he works the route, the story also explores his relationship with his mother—the route name being a reference to the climbing genes passed on from his mother's side.

"He lives and climbs with his mother who works on an organic farm nearby up above the cliff," explains Zac.

"We see Seb's lifestyle and secret powers that came from his mother."

RESISTANCE CLIMBING

Featuring: Andrew Bisharat
Location: Palestine
Duration: 40 minutes

URWAH ASKAR CLIMBS ON ROUTE GRADED 7C AT YABRUD.
REEL ROCK / AUSTIN SIADAK

Resistance Climbing is the only one of the three film shoots that Zac joined this time.

The film follows Andrew Bisharat, an American who has been climbing and writing about climbing his whole life, on his first visit to Palestine. He joins a diverse community of climbers in the conflict-ridden West Bank as they connect with the land and seek respite from the burdens of the Israeli occupation

“The climbers tell us and give examples of what their daily life is like under occupation. What is Palestine, who are Palestinians… and what has climbing done for them,” said Zac.

“One of the points of the movie is that in a place like Palestine climbing has this importance that might be difficult for others to understand, because the conflict is about land and about freedom and freedom of movement, and those things are being taken away from Palestinians.”

“Andrew’s great grandfather was Palestinian, they lost their home in 1948 when Israel was created. In many ways his family’s story traces the modern history of Palestine and Israel,” said Zac.

“He grew up American with this Palestinian last name, and didn’t know too much about his heritage. He packed it away a little bit because, as he says in the movie, Arabs were always the bad guys in the movies in the 1980s when he was growing up.”

Rock climbing is fairly new in Palestine too. Only eight years or so ago there were no Palestinian rock climbers in the West Bank, but a group of American’s who were living there began a program to introduce the sport locally.

Zac added that when Reel Rock reached out to the Palestinian climbers to propose making the film, “it felt really special for them”.

And in turn, the trip held special meaning for Zac. “I’ve grown really close with a number of people who are in the film and I’ve learned a lot about what it‘s like to be Palestinian,” he said. “It’s an important story and it’s a good movie. It’s relevant to our world beyond climbing, and we just want to make the best films we can and pursue things that are important.”

THE NORTH FACE
PRESENTS
REEL ROCK 17
Black Diamond
YETI

THU, 9 MAR	SYDNEY EAST / RITZ CINEMAS
THU, 9 MAR	HOBART / THE PLAYHOUSE THEATRE
FRI, 10 MAR	WOLLONGONG / GALA TWIN CINEMA
FRI, 10 MAR	BRISBANE / CINEPLEX HAWTHORNE
SAT, 11 MAR	HALLS GAP / HALLS GAP CENTENARY HALL
TUE, 14 MAR	SYDNEY NEWTOWN / DENDY CINEMAS
WED, 15 MAR	CANBERRA / DENDY CINEMAS
THU, 16 MAR	MELBOURNE / THE ASTOR THEATRE
FRI, 17 MAR	GOLD COAST / HOTA, HOME OF THE ARTS
FRI, 17 MAR	TAMWORTH / TEN 4 BOULDERING
SUN, 19 MAR	HUSKISSON / HUSKISSON PICTURES
TUE, 21 MAR	BLUE MOUNTAINS / MOUNT VIC FLICKS
THU, 23 MAR	PERTH / CAMELOT OUTDOOR CINEMA
THU, 23 MAR	PERTH / LUNA PALACE CINEMAS
SAT, 25 MAR	TOWNSVILLE / LECTURE THEATRE
SAT, 25 MAR	LAUNCESTON / BETA PARK BOULDERING
SAT, 25 MAR	BALLARAT / FRICTION BOULDERING
MON, 27 MAR	BLUE MOUNTAINS / MOUNT VIC FLICKS
FRI, 31 MAR	HOBART / THE PEACOCK THEATRE
SUN, 2 APR	PERTH / PORTSIDE BOULDERS O'CONNOR
THU, 6 APR	SYDNEY NTHN. BEACHES / GLEN ST THEATRE
FRI, 14 APR	MAITLAND / PULSE CLIMBING
FRI, 21 APR	NEWCASTLE / PULSE CLIMBING ADAMSTOWN
FRI, 21 APR	GEELONG / THE ROCK CENTRE
FRI, 28 APR	CENTRAL COAST / PULSE CLIMBING GOSFORD
APRIL 2023	SUNSHINE COAST / FLOW BOULDERING
SUN, 30 APR	BEECHWORTH / MAY DAY ARTS CENTRE

DON'T MISS THREE HEART-STOPPING NEW FILMS FEATURING THE YEAR'S BIGGEST CLIMBING & ADVENTURE STORIES: A WILD EXPEDITION ON NAMELESS TOWER IN PAKISTAN; A NEW CUTTING-EDGE ROUTE IN A MASSIVE LIMESTONE CAVE IN FRANCE; AND A JOURNEY TO PALESTINE'S WEST BANK TO EXPLORE THE POWER OF CLIMBING TO CHANGE LIVES.

PRESENTED BY THE NORTH FACE AND SUPPORTED BY BLACK DIAMOND & YETI.

REELROCKFILMTOUR.COM

WILD EARTH LIVE | LIFE | ADVENTURE
SCARPA
GME
Zippo
Adventure+
VERTICAL LIFE

WALLS ARE MEANT FOR CLIMBING

WILD EARTH
LIVE | LIFE | ADVENTURE

AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST RANGE OF TECHNICAL OUTDOOR GEAR

Get your coupon code!

SCAN ME

FREE SHIPPING - AUSTRALIA WIDE

ORDER TRACKING

80 DAY RETURNS

afterpay zip

ADVENTURE NOW, PAY LATER!

wildearth.com.au

Excellent ★★★★★

Rated 4.7 / 5 based on 6,345 reviews on ★ Trustpilot

STORE LOCATOR:

25 Central Dr, Burleigh Heads QLD

Skygate Home & Life, 30 The Circuit, Brisbane

COMMITTED.

There’s only one way to reach the top. You try and try again. There’s always failure. You learn from your past mistakes. Train some more. Gain experience. Then you try harder. Fail and fall again. You take a beating. Get hurt. And keep coming back. But in the end, when you pull past the point of no return, steady your breath, and stare down what’s between you and success, you know what you have to do. Commit. We know what it takes. At Black Diamond, we’re committed to catching the falls along the way.

Black Diamond

Black Diamond Athlete Colin Duffy Christian Adam

FEATURE

OPERATION DESERT STORM

REEL ROCK ATHLETE FEATURE: SEB BOUIN

Making headlines around the world as the hardest route in the Americas, Seb Bouin's November 2022 ascent of Suprême Jumbo Love (38/5.15b) adds yet another 5.15b feather in the cap of his remarkable climbing resume—firmly solidifying him as one of the best climbers in the world.

Seb's determination in pursuit of his goals is on full display in his Reel Rock film DNA, and is echoed here in his recount of the journey to establish Suprême Jumbo Love. What really strikes a chord with us over here on the other side of the world, is Seb's deep love of the history of climbing, and his passion for connecting to the people and place that makes a route, as much as the route itself.

From the desk of Vertical Life Senior Contributor and Common Climber's Assistant Editor, Dave Barnes, comes this insightful look behind the scenes of Seb Bouin's heavily reported send of Suprême Jumbo Love (38/5.15b).

SEB ON SUPRÊME JUMBO LOVE [5.15C/38] CLARK MOUNTAIN
CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
IMAGES BY CHRISTIAN ADAM AND SUPPLIED BY BLACK DIAMOND.

The internet and its endless chatter churns out climbing news and climber's exploits faster than gossip. Amongst the noise there is still gold to be found in them hills. For the climbers who have the audacity to wear the crown of king lines, French climber Seb Bouin, is a prince of these times. His recent ascent of Suprême Jumbo Love (5.15c/38) at Clark Mountain in California rightly made headlines around the world. Seb shared his experience through voice mail snippets, sometimes in his car, others at the crag and a few times at home.

Seb is the man of the moment, a Frenchman on a mission who is a serious contender for ticking the world's hardest climb after his establishment of DNA (5.15+/9c/39) in Verdon Gorge in France, as the ReelRock 17 film of the same name explores. Seb isn't focused solely on grades though, he's a climber who froths on experiences. For him it's the combination of the rock, place, culture, and people that makes a good line great.

Jumbo Love was developed by Randy Leavitt in the 1990s, but it was Chris Sharma who completed it in 2008 at grade 5.15b/37. In 2010, Chris followed his send with a 20 metre direct start, grading the direct start on its own a 5.14d/35. But he was unable to complete the link up, and they remained two separate climbs. The direct start, coupled with the original route made for some 70 metres of the hardest climbing yet visioned in the United States. This became the perfect lure for Seb, with the quality of climbers who had invested time in unlocking the line also adding to the appeal.

Reflecting on Jumbo Love Seb said, "The route inspired me when I was a boy starting out climbing. In 2016, I saw a Reel Rock film of Chris Sharma climbing Jumbo Love... I was really attracted to being alone in the middle of nowhere. For me it's not just about climbing, it's also the adventure."

Jonathan Siegrist, one of only a handful of Jumbo Love's ascentionists, shared the following with a grin: "I knew Seb was coming to the US for Jumbo Love because he asked me about it last year in Spain. I told him that I felt this route would be so perfect for him. And knowing his insanely technical style with the knee bars, I knew he would find some methods that worked well for him."

Seb said that while his original objective was to complete Jumbo Love, a route that had inspired him since childhood, he was also intrigued by the direct start. "I had spoken with Chris [Sharma] about Jumbo Love, and he said there was something [else] harder and beautiful... Scoping pictures of the colossal overhanging wall and gaining psyche from him who shared that this was up there with the hardest routes in the world, I was determined to experience it for myself," he said.

The die was cast. The trip quickly became a double objective; Seb would try Jumbo Love and if it worked out, he'd link the direct. It took three days for Seb and photographer Clarisse Bompard to travel to America from Europe. On the dusty drive through the Mojave Desert and on arrival at Clark Mountain, he saw that this foreign landscape would add to the challenge.
"Ultimately, we were quite alone in the desert for 10 days... It was surprising seeing the beauty of the desert. It was a place where alone finds a home", he said. At over 2000m above sea level, Clark Mountain's remote climbing is only accessible at the mercy of the weather.

"The landscape was hot and dry throughout the day and cool in the evenings. It smelled like death. Everything was aggressive," Seb said.

When he reached Jumbo Love, Seb said he was impressed but not intimidated.

Jonathan Siegrist reflected on the route as he described what Seb would have seen. "The route is so pumpy, generally not-so-bad holds, aside from the infamous crux which is all about a bad right-hand pinch and a mono. It's just so involved principally because of its length; 60 metres of very hard climbing," he said.

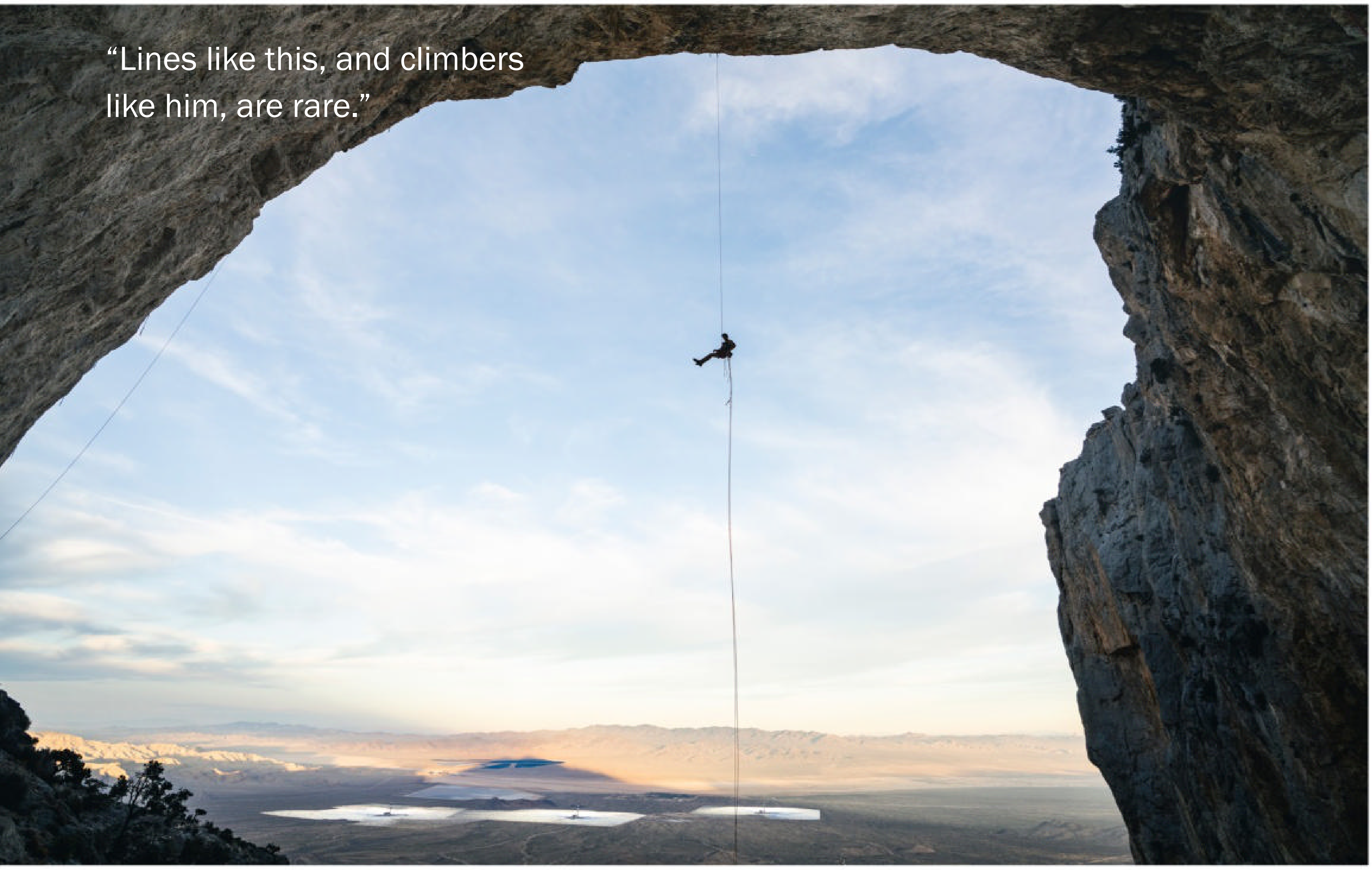
Having friendly locals to assist in navigating the intricacies of the rock, weather, and logistics, maximises time on a project. After the first 10 days, Seb had key folks on site to assist, including Randy Leavitt who came by plane to share the history and beta of the place and the climb. The others in the party were also stoked as they were able to hear firsthand of the genesis of Jumbo Love from its original developer. Seb was warmed by their stoke. "Randy was a big inspiration to Chris, and Chris was a big inspiration to me," he said.

Seb enjoys history and his pilgrimage to repeat French classics and climb with the climbers' who first sent them is well documented. He savoured listening to Randy froth over the intricacies of the route, and the effort it took to send it.

During our conversation, Seb's psyche for the climb amplified, "Listening to these guys, it was 100 percent passion. That and the adventure of this type of climbing trip meant that of course, I knew I really wanted to climb it."

So began piecing the plan together. Steve Rolston assisted Seb to find the crag. He too was trying Jumbo Love, so his beta was valuable. Chris Sharma had recent beta, but for the most part Seb gathered it on his own in the Jumbo Love network that he was tying into, and his mind began to piece together an audacious plan.

"If I succeeded on Jumbo Love, I would just try the direct start and see how far I could go. Jumbo Love looked fine, and I knew a few other



“Lines like this, and climbers like him, are rare.”

climbers had completed it, but the direct start looked impossible with sparse holds,” Seb said.

The stars aligned and in October 2022, Seb sent Jumbo Love. With Jumbo Love now in the bag, he turned to the direct start. To maintain hydration and conserve energy, some nights they just sprawled out on the ledges below the climb making camp. Between hard sessions and while he had the opportunity, he also made time to experience American culture and the lure of the desert landscape.

“Basically, we were in Vegas enjoying Red Rocks, going on hikes, taking photographs, and enjoying the landscape,” said Seb. “And the city of Vegas. I wanted to experience it, those lights, and the crazy people.”

For climbing days, a pattern emerged. Waking up early, driving to the site, then walking to the crag, bouldering around the base of the project, and having a try. The walk in and bouldering near the base provided good warm up options to make use of the cool morning temperatures.

Each day Seb’s knowledge grew, as did his confidence. “The climbing itself required focus and I had one chance… This place was far from home, and I knew I couldn’t come back when I wanted,” said Seb. “So, to try the direct, I would need to prepare and find the best day. In my climbing life I have learnt about pressure and the need for strategy.” On a cool Tuesday morning on the 22nd of November 2022, he seized his moment, and succeeded in linking the direct start to the already established Jumbo Love. He named it Suprême Jumbo Love, and sealed the deal with a grade of 38/5.15b.

While some commentators have suggested his use of knee pads colours the achievement, to those who witnessed it, that meant little. The climb is simply too technical, too long and too hard. A knee pad in a harsh rock landscape simply protects the skin, but not enough to scrape an advantage.

Randy said Seb’s achievement is notable for American climbing. “The tenacity it takes to make that rough drive, hike a long approach to a remote crag, then climb 5.15 really separates the merely talented from those that have both the talent, vision, and motivation,” he said.

“Seb mentioned to me that there were some pretty lonely days at first when it was only he and Clarisse, high above the desert on the mountain cliff. But he kept going out there because he knew it was one of the world’s king lines. Lines like this, and climbers like him, are rare.”

Seb said his favourite memories of the climbing were being in a remote place with a small group of friends. “I would like to say thank you to America for welcoming me and the amazing support from everyone who gathered at Clark Mountain to see me send Suprême Jumbo Love,” he said.

“Being far from home, I was unbalanced in this new terrain and these people gave me a firm base to work from. We made history together, and the friendships made there will remain.”

THE NORTH FACE® PRESENTS

REEL ROCK 17

Black Diamond YETI

AUSTRALIAN TOUR PRESENTED BY

WILD EARTH
LIVE | LIFE | ADVENTURE

SCREENING NOW

SCAN FOR TICKETS

- OR GO TO -

www.reelrockfilmtour.com

ECOFLOW BACK COUNTRY CUISINE theCrag SCARPA Black Diamond ZIPPO GME ADVENTURE+ VERTICAL LIFE

WORDS KRISH SEEWRAJ
LEAD IMAGE BY JEREMY SHEPHERD,
ARTICLE IMAGES BY KRISH SEEWRAJ AND SONJA MOHNEN

JEREMY SHEPHERD SNAPS A STUNNING SUNSET FEATURING JOEY CURRY ON W.A CLASSIC KARMA [24], CASTLE ROCK, WESTERN AUSTRALIA. JEREMY SHEPERD

WEST COAST BEST COAST

EXPLORING WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S SOUTHWEST COASTLINE

In the southwest of Western Australia lies Busselton—a small coastal city known to local climbers as a gateway to a multitude of crags. All are relatively small, but aesthetically appealing and within an hour's drive of the town. Mostly spread out along the rugged coast, each crag offers a different setting, atmosphere, rock type and a day or more of climbing.

Visiting climbers often flock to the main cliffs of Wilyabrup, made famous by the iconic Steel Wall with its steep, finely featured face. Bob's Hollow will give you a hearty helping of overhanging, strenuous limestone sport routes on epic flakes, pockets, stalactite and column features –it's easy to see why it became a popular local alternative to Thailand during COVID.

These locations can be crowded, especially on long weekends like Easter. But the hidden gems, in locations that you may often have all to yourself, are the focus of this article. Even though you may avoid the crowds at these crags, you are likely to bump into one or two of the local crew—the vast majority of whom are friendly, helpful and happy to have a chat and offer an opportunity to climb with them.

Welcome to our Local Lore column, where we drop a pin on the climbing map and ask locals to give us the beta. From local climbing legends and lore to must-do-routes and historical deep dives, we're letting our favourite locals loose on these pages to tell us how we should be spending our time in their backyards. In this edition, we're heading over to Western Australia with local climber guidebook author, Krish Seewraj. He gives us the beta on the varied rock and cinematic ocean views that WA climbing is known for, whilst avoiding the crowds by exploring some of the lesser-known local crags.

CASTLE ROCK

This granitic gneiss outcrop glows orange in the early and late sunlight. It may be small in size, but it's right on the edge of the crystal clear waters abutting the Meelup Regional Park. It can get hot in the morning sun, but affords the perfect way to cool down with great snorkelling right off the rocks. Despite the low number of climbs, the rock has features unlike anywhere else in the region, with rounded dishes and flakes that may perplex (or excite!) the mostly-gym climber. There are also a few hard test pieces, with routes in the high 20s.

CRAG CLASSICS

- **Corn Flakes (12)**—a classic for great exposed but well-protected climbing.
- **Well Rounded (20)**—this aptly named climb will have you struggle to work out how to use the holds and which way to tension your body.

WELLY DAM

As all good stories should start, we begin with an area with a chequered history. There are a few who may bag the bolting of the routes at Welly Dam, but I would risk saying that this may come more from envy of having missed out in the development of this crag than truth-based criticism.

For many, the first time they climb here they find it intimidating and hard. The black and grey-streaked granite walls, carved out of the hillside to provide granite boulders for the dam that lies below in the valley, are hard to read.

Steep, technical, sustained climbing awaits. And once you get a taste of this place, it is hard not to like it.

If you come over with the family in tow, this place is perfect with a grassy base for picnics. It also offers hikes, mountain bike tracks, and water sports on the reservoir.

Dan Meester fell for this place and in the early 2010s, adding some quality lines while maintaining the same bolting ethics of the original routes. So passionate was Dan that he would at times drag a generator and flood lights up, to climb as you can at Kangaroo Point in Brisbane, at night.

WELLY DAM – KRISH SEEWRAJ FINISHING OFF ON FLIGHT SIMULATOR (21).
SONJA MOHNEN

He was not alone, and both Kym Hartley and Jonas Hollingworth also added some fine additions in the mid-2010s. I too added three more additions just a few weeks back.

While it is easy to say every route here is great, this is one place I feel that is almost true. Although there isn't much for beginners—a few routes are below grade 18, but most are from 18 to 24.

CRAG CLASSICS

- **Ear of Fear (22)**—a fingery and nervous crux with a delectable corner above.
- **T3 (23)**—a great three-dimensional climb that will give you a full-body work out.

SMITHS BEACH

These granite crags arguably have the best friction of all the outcrops mentioned here, but these come as steep walls with rounded holds. The gear is there, but at times is in flared cracks which can be off-putting. Added to that, the proximity to the ocean makes this a perfect crag for those seeking an exciting trad adventure. Kym and I both stumbled across this crag in 2010, and it's how we first became acquainted with one another.

Kym was at the time hugely driven, seeking out new opportunities and hard problems, some of which are still awaiting a clean ascent. He had climbed a couple of routes at Smiths when I came across the area, and within the space of a month or so, I sieged the place with anyone willing to join me. A bolt-free place, with all bar one first ascent being a ground-up creation, in keeping with my British climbing ethics. One of my key partners in crime here was Craig Johnson. A wiry mechanic with an unnatural ape index, whose trade helps maintain great ability on crimps despite his now infrequent trips outdoors. But be warned, you need more than good crimping technique at Smiths; the crag requires body tension, an ability to smear, and a cool head.

Like Welly Dam, Smiths is another crag that seems to instil fear in many when they first come here. Those who come back for a second taste become hooked. In part due to the friction holding up on wet days, and the atmospheric coastal location, with the rock sentinel at the end of the zawn keeping the rage of the ocean at bay.

CRAG CLASSICS

- **The Billowing Sails (17)**—consistent climbing in an outrageous position over the ocean.
- **Cape to Crack (17)**—the leaning crack under a rooflet rams home the true meaning of rounded holds on excellent friction.

CHRIS HOWE ENJOYING THE SEA BREEZE ON TACKING INTO THE WIND (16)
KRISH SEEWRAJ

MOSES ROCKS

Without a doubt, my favourite crag has to be Moses Rocks, which I call Smiths' little brother. Like many of the coastal crags, it consists of granitic gneiss but the texture and features at each location vary considerably. This place, like Smiths Beach, has rounded holds, flared cracks, and friction that is maintained even when wet but is less steep and more forgiving.

Having spent my early climbing years in England, including many a trip to the Peak District, I can see similarities here that drew the early developers to the charms of this place.

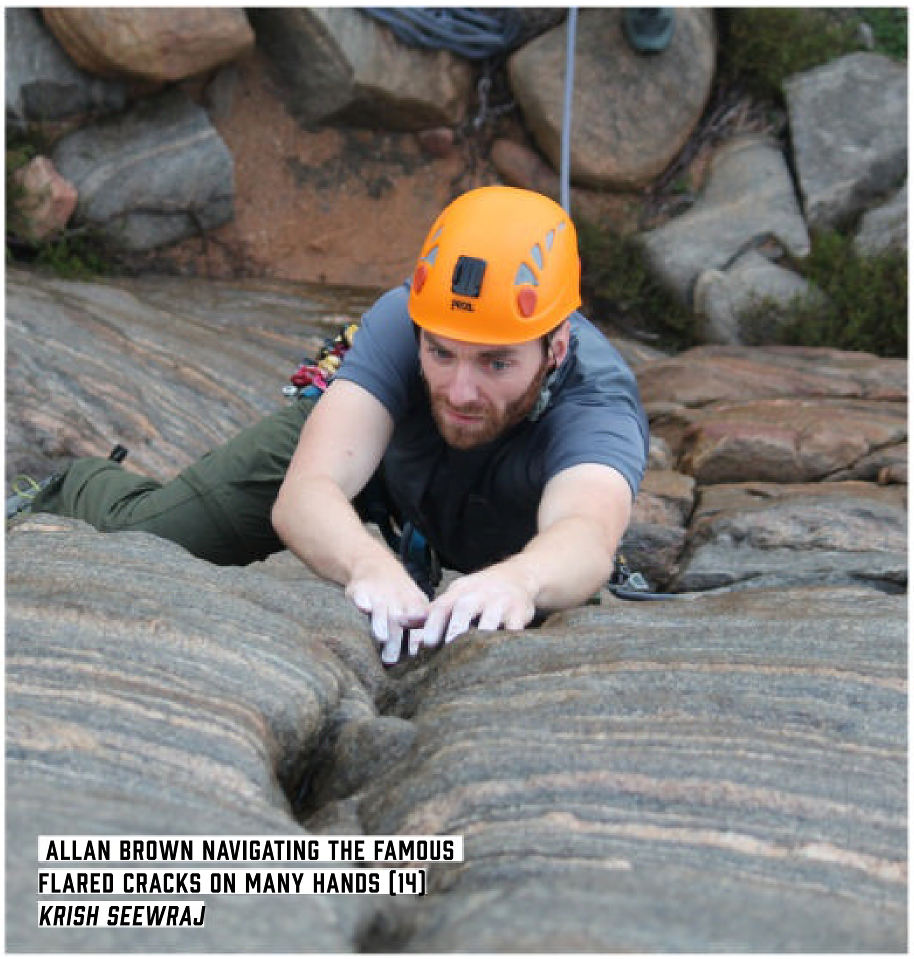
A key difference is that the boldness of the climbing here has been somewhat subdued with the addition of bolts, something you would never find in the Peak District. I have come to accept the bolts, as they help to ensure Moses Rocks always provides a chilled day out with a great atmosphere.

This place also offers a very fun zawn that includes a couple of routes that Ryan Doe (Rongy) and I established, which may never get repeat ascents.

More than 10 years back we found the usually boulder strewn base of the zawn covered in a sandy beach and every wall bone dry; conditions we haven't seen since.

CRAG CLASSICS

- **Hathersage (15)**—this Peak District namesake has a steep start on big holds, which leads you to a fingery headwall.
- **Wheely Things (15)**—a climb that is true to the grade and yields much easier if you know how to jam.


ALLAN BROWN NAVIGATING THE FAMOUS FLARED CRACKS ON MANY HANDS (14)
KRISH SEEWRAJ

ALLAN BROWN ON WHEELY THINGS (15)
KRISH SEEWRAJ

COPPER ROCKS – KYM HARTLEY – OPEN PROJECT AGAIN
KRISH SEEWRAJ

COPPER ROCKS —BOULDERING

Nearby Castle Rocks in Meelup Regional Park is Copper Rocks, a rightly popular bouldering spot. Steep-scooped formations on a wave-washed platform make this just one of the many great bouldering locations in the southwest of Western Australia. The area was first made popular by the classic problems established by Andy Lampard, and since then has gained much attention from young crushers coming out of the increasing number of boulder gyms in Perth.

More information about these crags is available from various sources, such as the printed book A Guide to Rock Climbing in WA's South West, PDF mini guides available on the Climbers Association of Western Australia website, and of course online from The Crag.

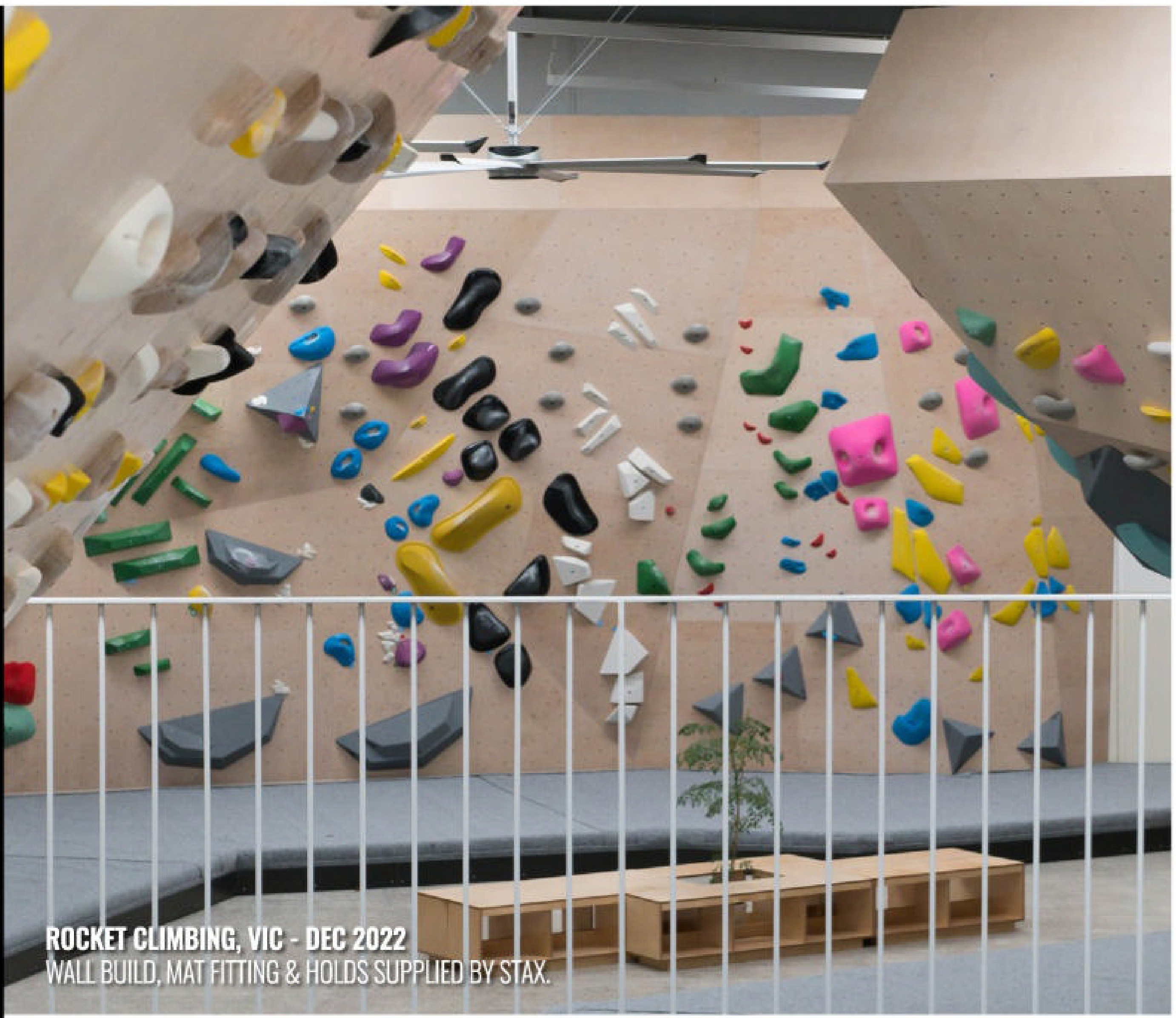
About the writer:
Krish began climbing more than 30 years ago with strong British traditional ethics. However, after moving to Australia in 2000, he has been known to partake in sport climbing—even bolting the occasional route! He is the author of South West ROCK—a guide to rock climbing in WA's south west (2015) and Rock Climbing in Central Australia (2005).

STAX CLIMBING

Based in W.A., Stax Climbing offers tailored, top-tier climbing walls and matting solutions at a reasonable price. We also represent leading holds and volumes brands to go with your walls. We service businesses both domestic and international.

We understand that a climbing gym is not just an investment opportunity; it is a dream, the embodiment of a passion.

Our team comprises of nationally accredited routesetters, experienced tradespeople and climbing wall designers. We pride ourselves on the experience, authenticity and passion that goes into our work, and pass this onto our clients.



ROCKET CLIMBING, VIC - DEC 2022
WALL BUILD, MAT FITTING & HOLDS SUPPLIED BY STAX.

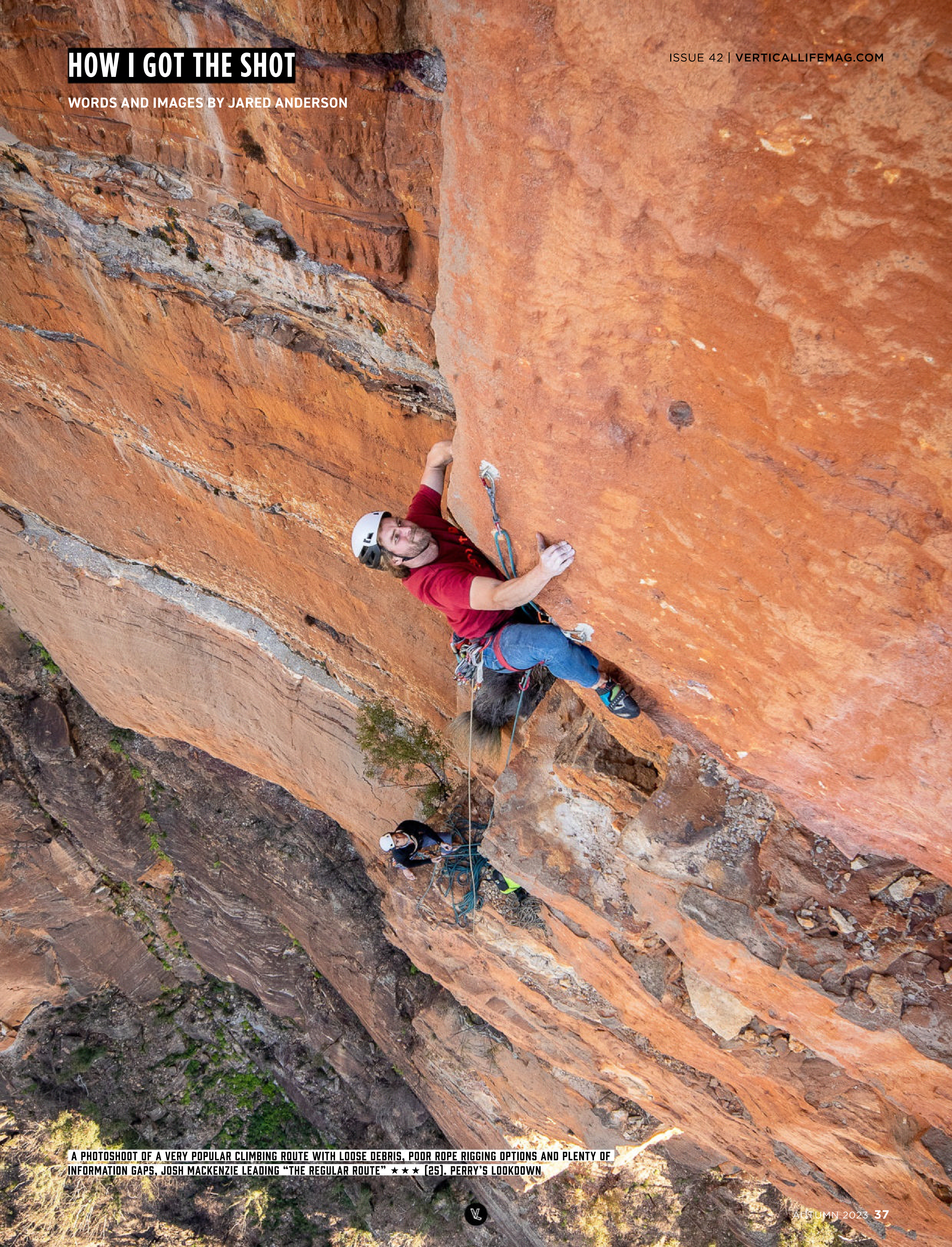
Walls & Matting
jacob@staxclimbing.com.au

www.staxclimbing.com.au
@stax_climbing

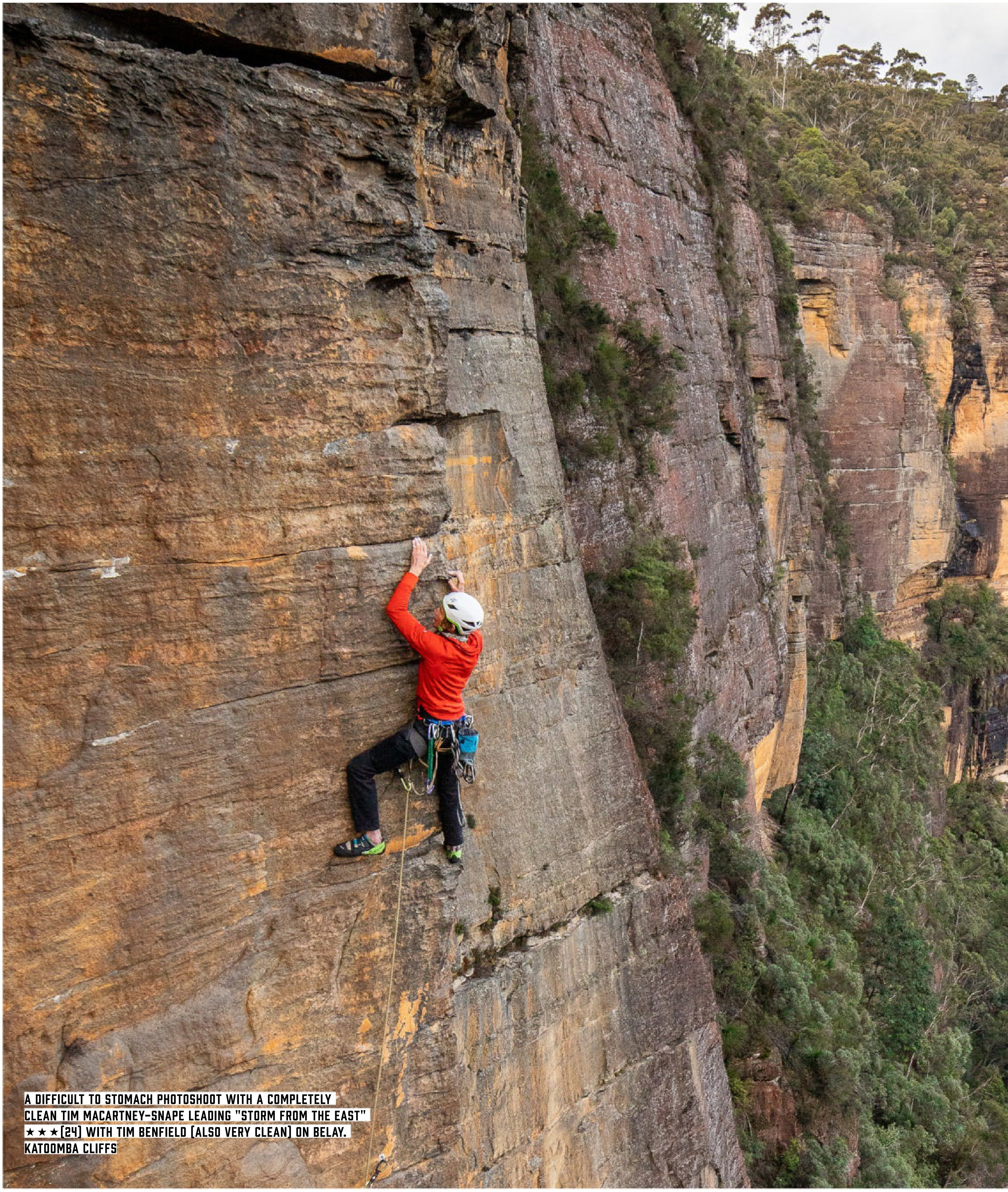
Holds & Volumes
will@staxclimbing.com.au

HOW I GOT THE SHOT

WORDS AND IMAGES BY JARED ANDERSON



A PHOTOSHOOT OF A VERY POPULAR CLIMBING ROUTE WITH LOOSE DEBRIS, POOR ROPE RIGGING OPTIONS AND PLENTY OF INFORMATION GAPS, JOSH MACKENZIE LEADING “THE REGULAR ROUTE” ★★★ (25). PERRY’S LOOKDOWN



A DIFFICULT TO STOMACH PHOTOSHOOT WITH A COMPLETELY CLEAN TIM MACARTNEY-SNAPE LEADING "STORM FROM THE EAST" ★★★(24) WITH TIM BENFIELD (ALSO VERY CLEAN) ON BELAY. KATOOMBA CLIFFS

Have you ever chundered on your hero? No? Well nor has Jared. But he's gotten a lot closer than most. The Bluies-based photographer is generally pretty confident about setting up shoots—navigating loose rock, long approaches and reading routes in reverse as he raps down with a sackful of photography gear. But the day after a big night, abseiling in from above to photograph Tim Macartney-Snape, he found himself afraid of dislodging more than loose rock.

On behalf of all climbing photographers around the world, I'd like to tell you: a photo from a multi-pitch route is often much more involved to capture than it looks. Not crazy difficult, just harder than you would expect from just seeing the end result.

That's certainly not a complaint, quite the opposite. Climbing 10 grades under your limit becomes boring quickly, just like photographing routes that provide no challenge also lose their appeal.

For most of my shoots in the Blue Mountains there are medium to long approaches, heavy loads of static rope and gear to carry, tricky abseils and long jumars back up. Most climbers who know the area would expect this level of effort when they see the photos.

What's often not visible is the loose rappels with dirt, scree, shrubs and large rocks interfering with my descent. The conditions in the Blue Mountains means that when I'm a few metres right or left of the climbing line, I become the first human to have touched that rock. And there are plenty of rocks that don't like to be touched; they protest by breaking off and plummeting to the ground, far below.

For every loose rock, I have to consider the safety of anyone beneath me, as well as my own safety once I get lower. For every sharp edge, I have to consider whether to protect with a rope-pro, a cam, a less than ideal nearby shrub, or to not protect at all. It's not overly difficult, but it's not easy either.

I must consider the changing lighting conditions and my camera settings, the climbers' progress through the pitches, the angle, and artistic vision I want to capture. I also have to tuck my body so my rope bag, shoes or straps are not accidentally getting in the shot.

Again, it's not that difficult, but it's not easy either.

For most popular routes there is clear guidance both in the guidebook and online about exactly what gear to pack and what to expect on the route...but only if you're climbing it.

If you're photographing it, descending from above, you're doing it in reverse. You need to repurpose the guidance as best you can by using the climbing beta and make your best guesses for all the remaining information gaps.

Popular sport crags can sometimes be more straightforward, but on longer or more remote routes there are often plenty of questions that can only be answered once you're out there on the rock. I'd much rather have a heavy pack and a longer jumar ahead knowing I'm in exactly the right position, than a light pack but unsure if I should rap right or left of an arete—the wrong answer could ruin the whole shoot.

The process is technically not difficult, but it can still be stressful at times. So when I lined up a photoshoot with Tim Macartney-Snape in an area I knew reasonably well with good information, I didn't think it would be especially difficult. While I didn't expect a total walk in the park, I just thought that things wouldn't get too complicated.

I'd been wanting to photograph Tim for about 12 months. We were both keen but we could never get our schedules to align. Tim is my mountaineering hero, so to say I was excited when we finally locked in a date and route, would be an understatement.

The weekend plans were: simple photoshoot with friends at Shipley (a Blue Mountains sport crag) on Saturday, a birthday party with campfire, drinks and camping that evening, followed by the "Storm from the East" photoshoot on Sunday with Tim. So how difficult could that be...?

Let's just say "near death" or "like a bag full of arseholes" are both fine ways to describe how I felt waking up that fateful Sunday morning. The beers I had enjoyed the night before were having their revenge.

Tim and I did the meet and greet, located the rap in point and I bounced down the rappel, swinging side-to-side with my two ropes, randomly half-twisting back and forth like a washing machine as I tried to get my desired mid-air position; all whilst trying to keep my stomach contents still inside my stomach.

Did I mention that Tim was directly below me at this stage? Have you ever met one of your heros and had a serious think about whether you might actually spew on them?
Not just spew in their presence, not just a splash on their shoes, but a large quantity of spew landing on them from 30 feet above, like raining spew, ON A LIVING LEGEND.

I've dealt with plenty of photoshoot challenges before, but I'd never expected this kind of problem. Tim and his climbing partner, the poor buggers, were lashed to a hanging belay so they couldn't even resort to the five Ds of dodgeball to escape—dodge, duck, dip, dive or dodge.

It's good etiquette to yell "ROCK" if you dislodge something from above, but do you actually yell "VOM" if it becomes a risk? What the hell is the protocol for this situation? If you were in their climbing shoes at this moment, would you appreciate the heads-up, only to wish you hadn't actually turned your head up? Or would you prefer it to be a confusing, yet slightly warm surprise?

After my belly stopped churning, I was beyond thrilled to see the route was so overhung that there was no chance my personal "Yak Banquet"* would reach them. As a bonus, I didn't even have to chunder into my camera bag.
Climbers often admit that epics and ordeals make the best campfire stories. After this adventure, I can tell you it is probably also true for photographers.

"Yak Banquet" is also the name of a grade 22 multi-pitch in the Blue Mountains. Unlike what Jared was afraid of unleashing, the climb has a three star rating.

Designed to keep you moving!

SOLUGEL
fisiocrem™

Temporary relief
of muscular aches
and pains.

SOLUGEL
fisiocrem™
Arnica • Hypericum • Calendula • Menthol • Melaleuca
Temporary relief of muscular aches and pains
AUST L 327081 250 g GEL

Arnica . Hypericum . Calendula . Menthol . Melaleuca

SOLUGEL
fisiocrem™

Available from the following
Australian retailers: Coles,
Woolworths, Chemist Warehouse
and your local pharmacy.

Always read the label and follow the directions for use.

SCORE A **BONUS** STANLEY QUADVAC™ NEVERLEAK™ MUG

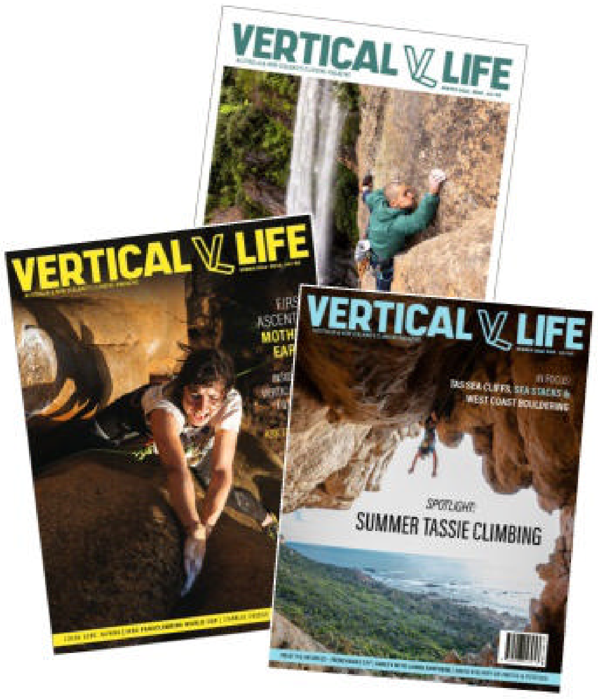
WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE TO VERTICAL LIFE MAGAZINE,
THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS AT STANLEY!

VALUED AT

$85.95RRP

- LEAKPROOF WITH A LIFETIME GUARANTEE
- 250ML CAPACITY
- DURABLE BUILD & BPA-FREE
- 0.7MM 18/8 STAINLESS STEEL FINISH
- LIGHTWEIGHT & PACKABLE ONLY WEIGHS 260G!

We haven't wasted any time in putting Stanley's Neverleak™ tech to the test by throwing it in and out of our gym and crag bags, and wow - we're impressed! Finally, a mug we can chuck into our packs without worrying if it'll make our peanut butter & banana sangas soggy -it's about damn time! The Quadvac™ insulation will keep your espresso warm for 4 hours, or your iced latte cold for 6 and at a packable size, it's the perfect climbing companion. Punching well above its weight in durability with a tough finish made of quality stainless steel, Stanley guarantees it'll go the distance with their Built For Life™ lifetime warranty. With sustainability in mind, Stanley makes durable and reusable gear that lasts a lifetime, which keeps junk out of landfill. We're stoked to have them supporting this issue of VL and we're sure you'll love the Stanley Quadvac™ Neverleak™ Mug as much as we do!



SUBSCRIBER BENEFITS

- ✓ NEVER MISS AN ISSUE
- ✓ GREAT GIFT IDEA
- ✓ **FREE** DELIVERY TO YOUR DOOR
- ✓ **BONUS** STANLEY QUADVAC™ NEVERLEAK™ MUG
- ✓ **CHEAPER THAN BUYING AT RETAIL OUTLETS** (SAVE UP TO $56.40 ON A 3-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION)
- ✓ **SUBSCRIPTIONS SUPPORT THE CLIMBING CREATIVES ON OUR PAGES** TO KEEP SHARING STORIES THAT MATTER & IMAGES THAT INSPIRE - **THAT'S SOMETHING TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT!**

STANLEY
SINCE 1913

It's easy to subscribe!

SCAN THE QR CODE TO HEAD ONLINE
OR FILL OUT THE FORM BELOW

subscribe.verticallifemag.com.au

Subscribe To Vertical Life For:

☐ 3 Years - 12 Issues - $99 - SAVE $56.40

☐ 2 Years - 8 Issues - $70 - SAVE $33.60

☐ 1 Year - 4 Issues - $40 - SAVE $11.80 (no gift)

OR

☐ I already subscribe.
Please renew my subscription with the offer selected above

THIS SUBSCRIPTION IS:

☐ FOR ME

MY DETAILS
(Mrs/Ms/Miss/Mr/Mx/Ind/None/Others)
Address
State Postcode
Phone
Email

AND/OR

☐ A GIFT FOR SOMEONE ELSE

GIFT RECIPIENT DETAILS
(Mrs/Ms/Miss/Mr/Mx/Ind/None/Others)
Address
State Postcode
Phone
Email

PAYMENT DETAILS

Cheque/Money order for $ ______________ is enclosed payable to Adventure Entertainment or charge my

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Cardholder's name (please print)

Expiry date / CVV number

Cardholder's signature

Please Photocopy this form for additional subscriptions.

Offer is available while stocks last for Australia and New Zealand residents only. Offer ends Monday, 3 July 2023, while stocks last.Free gifts will be mailed separately within 30 days of ordering and any colour variations will be selected randomly. Subscriptions will start the next issue on sale. If you are already subscribed, we will extend your subscription by the additional length purchased. Postal orders can take up to 6 weeks to process-for faster turnaround, order online (subscribe.verticallifemag.com.au).

☐ Please tick if you don't wish to be kept updated on Vertical Life Magazine Specials

☐ Tick this box if you DO NOT wish to receive the free gift

POST: ADVENTURE ENTERTAINMENT, PO BOX 161, HORNSBY NSW 1630
CALL: SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE 02 8227 6486
EMAIL: MAGAZINES@ADVENTUREENTERTAINMENT.COM

GETTING TO KNOW

Will SKEA

(HE/HIM)

BLUE MOUNTAINS/
WHEREVER THE
ADVENTURE IS

EDITED BY WENDY BRUERE
IMAGES SUPPLIED BY WILL SKEA

LEAD IMAGE BY NATALIE CHENEY, THE GRAND TRAVERSE, REMARKABLES, NEW ZEALAND

What do cats and climbing have in common? Apparently not much… unless you ask William Skea, mountain mentor and founder of his own animal rescue charity. His path may not have been easy or in any way straightforward, but after a military career, training as mountaineering guide, navigating mental health recovery and surviving an avalanche, he realised exactly what he wanted to do with his life: lead trips to raise money to care for cats in need. Oh, and he's just 28 years old. *(Please no one ask me what I was doing at 28–Wendy)*

Content warning:
This article contains reference to self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

Let's start at the beginning. How did you get into climbing and mountaineering?

I started to climb when I was 17 by joining the local university club. I climbed with them each week at Kangaroo Point and around the crags of Brisbane on weekends, such as Frog Buttress, the Glasshouse Mountains, and Girraween. I went to the Blue Mountains with them at the end of the year for three weeks instead of doing schoolies.

I started to mountaineer the following year when I joined the military in Canberra. I signed up to the Army Alpine Association where we started with a 7-day snow survival course at Kosciuszko National Park. It was pretty epic—we built snow caves and lived in them the entire time while we went ice climbing or alpine climbing at Blue Lake each day.

At the end of my first year, I went to New Zealand and hired a mountain guide. We climbed the Remarkables Grand Traverse, Mount Footstool, Mount Wakefield, the Anzac Peaks, and Mount Cook.

But after that trip, back in the military, I had a near-death accident during a training exercise that led me to develop PTSD, major depressive disorder, tinnitus, panic disorder, and a sleep disorder. I also experienced self-harm, and suicidal thoughts.

Eventually I was medically discharged, and I didn't climb for a couple years while I received treatment. Climbing again was always my goal, although I felt I couldn't ever work or be a guide.

Wow. What a journey. How did you recover from that?

Once I stabilised and could climb again, I reached out to my old climbing mentors from the Army Alpine Association and received some of the best mentorship and support in my life.

They helped me to climb despite my poor mental health. They were the heroes in my story. Through climbing again, my mental health gradually improved and I realised my goal was to eventually become a mountain guide like them.

After two years from discharging the military, I was put on a 100 percent incapacitated pension for life. Once I felt well enough, I put it towards a one-way flight to the USA and used it as my "mountain guiding scholarship".

I travelled to as many mountain ranges as I could to build experience and grow as a person. I climbed within my limitations, which were however gradually getting better—I was still experiencing panic attacks in public, sleeping 14 to 18 hours per day, and had the worst depressive episodes. But I would get out when I could, so long as it was within my personal limits. I initially struggled to find climbing partners, but I ultimately found incredible ones who understood mental health.

Over the years, my mental health improved and I found myself becoming the mentor. I met others struggling with mental health who I could support to enable their adventures. People in that position might need multiple rest days between climbs, or to work through panic attacks on a route, but that didn't mean they couldn't climb. We could still do a big wall in Yosemite between depressive episodes. I found that climbing was similar for them as it was to me—it saved them, motivated them, and helped them recover.

> *"I try to be good at every type of climbing so that when I am in the mountains I've got the skills and experience to get myself through any situation."*

You've gone on to climb some pretty big things… Mt Rainier, and other big walls. What's your secret to getting to the top?

I wouldn't say I have one secret to getting to the top. I try to be good at every type of climbing so that when I am in the mountains I've got the skills and experience to get myself through any situation. I used this strategy to train to be a mountain guide; I broke down each component of alpinism and wrote a list of the best places in the world to develop my skills and experience.

For example, it's been handy to know how to aid climb from my time in Yosemite—I've gotten myself through so many unclimbable sections in the mountains from using aid climbing. I've also spent several seasons in Indian Creek and Squamish in the US, which are both crack climbing meccas on sandstone and

ICE-CLIMBING IN JOHNSTONE CANYON, CANADIAN ROCKIES

granite. Now I'm able to climb through any crack or chimney in the mountains no matter how funky they might be.

It's also been handy spending seasons in the Canadian Rockies ice climbing. I've since been able to climb any ice in the mountains with ease, thanks to time spent developing my ice and mixed climbing skills there. The European Alps are an incredible place to work on ski mountaineering or rock scrambling—the Europeans are so refined at moving fast and light when they need to.

What is your hardest ascent?

Freerider, 5.13a, trad, VI commitment, 1,000 meters, 30 pitches. It was incredible. I climbed it over six days with Alastair Mcdowell and Audrey Alholm. We all trained for six months in our own countries first (Australia, New Zealand, and the US, respectively), focusing on general strength, endurance, and crack climbing.

Then, we spent a month road tripping around Canada and the US in spring to practice climbing routes similar to Freerider at day crags. We needed to climb as many 5.11 finger cracks as we could (simulating most of Freerider's climbing), followed by as many 5- to 6-inch offwidths as we could (simulating the Monster Offwidth on Freerider), followed by bouldering v8, to replicate the style of the crux pitch.

In Yosemite we did several smaller objectives and practiced all the skills of bigwalling on the ground first, including hauling 150kg of food, water, and equipment. Then we tested these skills on two and three pitch climbs.

By the time we started up Freerider, we felt experienced and skilled enough for anything it would throw at us. We freed most of the route, except the crux move on boulder problem, a couple of wet pitches, and a few super hard crack sections, where our aid climbing experience paid off. Despite thunderstorms hitting us every afternoon, we brought a stormproof portaledge with enough food and water for 10 days if we needed it, and finally on day six, we stood on the summit.

Have you had any near misses?

My biggest near-miss was on Sq—-s Tit in the Canadian Rockies in 2016. I had just finished my first ice climbing season and I couldn't find a mentor while there, so I was climbing with friends from Australia.

My friend Josef and I could see the mountain from the library in town, and it looked like a great ridgeline scramble. We didn't appreciate the importance of asking locals for advice before climbing anything, so we'd planned it on our own that afternoon and decided to climb it the next day. It was May and there was still a half-metre snowpack.

We made it two-thirds of the way up, when, with about 20 minutes of sun on the snow, the whole slope avalanched. The

ON THE SUMMIT OF EL CAP WITH ALASTAIR AND AUDREY AFTER COMPLETING FREERIDER, 5.13A

> *"We made it two-thirds of the way up when, with about 20 minutes of sun on the snow, the whole slope avalanched."*

route was well known for avalanching as soon as the sun touches it and someone steps on it—the face is almost entirely a rock slab, and once it warms up, even just a little, the snow melts and easily lubricates the slope.

Josef slid with the avalanche first for 30 metres. I was off the avalanche and watched him. He was able to stop when his ice axe wedged into a crack on the slab. He broke his femur and was bleeding moderately. I took a few steps towards him, and then the part of the slope I was on avalanched too. My ice axe also wedged into the rock slab, but not before I had slid down 60 metres with the snow. Josef told me it was like the sword Excalibur wedged upright in the rock.

I kept going for another 200 meters. Every boulder I hit caused an explosion of pain in my body. I remember experiencing my hips crushing on one boulder, then my back, then my ribs and shoulders the further I slid. I felt I was falling to my death. Then, one boulder threw me off the avalanche path and onto soft snow beside it and I starfished to a stop.

My body felt broken and I was in so much pain. I watched the avalanche continue to the valley while my vision went white. I relaxed as I lost consciousness and thought my dying was a relief from the pain.

Two hours later we were both carried off the mountain by a long line attached to a helicopter. We were both hypothermic from so long in the snow. I don't remember much until the hospital in Calgary. It turned out I hadn't broken a single bone in my body, but I was covered in hematomas. I spent two weeks in hospital, then two months in bed before I could walk around.

I learned so much from that accident. Some of the most important ones were finding local mentors, taking avalanche forecasting courses, seeking beta from locals if climbing in their countries, stop building knowledge like a tower and instead like a pyramid and lowering my risk threshold. The accident helped me realise that there is more to life than climbing.

After that accident, I took six months off to go bike touring across the French countryside. I went back to the Canadian Rockies in autumn and reclimbed the route as it is meant to be climbed—without snow on the ridge.

People get into guiding and mentoring for lots of different reasons... you're probably the only person doing it for the cats.

Tell me about that.

In 2020, after a year of apprentice rock guiding in Squamish, my visa ran out and I had to leave Canada.

Back in Sydney, I started volunteering for a street cat charity.

After a couple of months I visited one of the people running the charity at her home. I was shocked to see this woman had over a hundred street cats living with her, mostly in cages, in her one-bedroom house. I saw kittens stacked on top of kittens in bird cages with just newspaper between them, all covered in faeces and urine. Cats were sick, near dying, and there were bugs and fleas everywhere.

I called the RSPCA, but in the meantime I needed to get medical treatment for these cats and find new foster carers for them. I didn't know anyone as I was new to Sydney, but I knew the Sydney Climbers Facebook page. I started writing posts looking for foster carers. Then a friend offered to cover a vet bill if I took her climbing for a weekend.

> *"I posted again on Sydney Climbers, this time asking if anyone else would like to be guided in exchange for paying for a vet bill."*

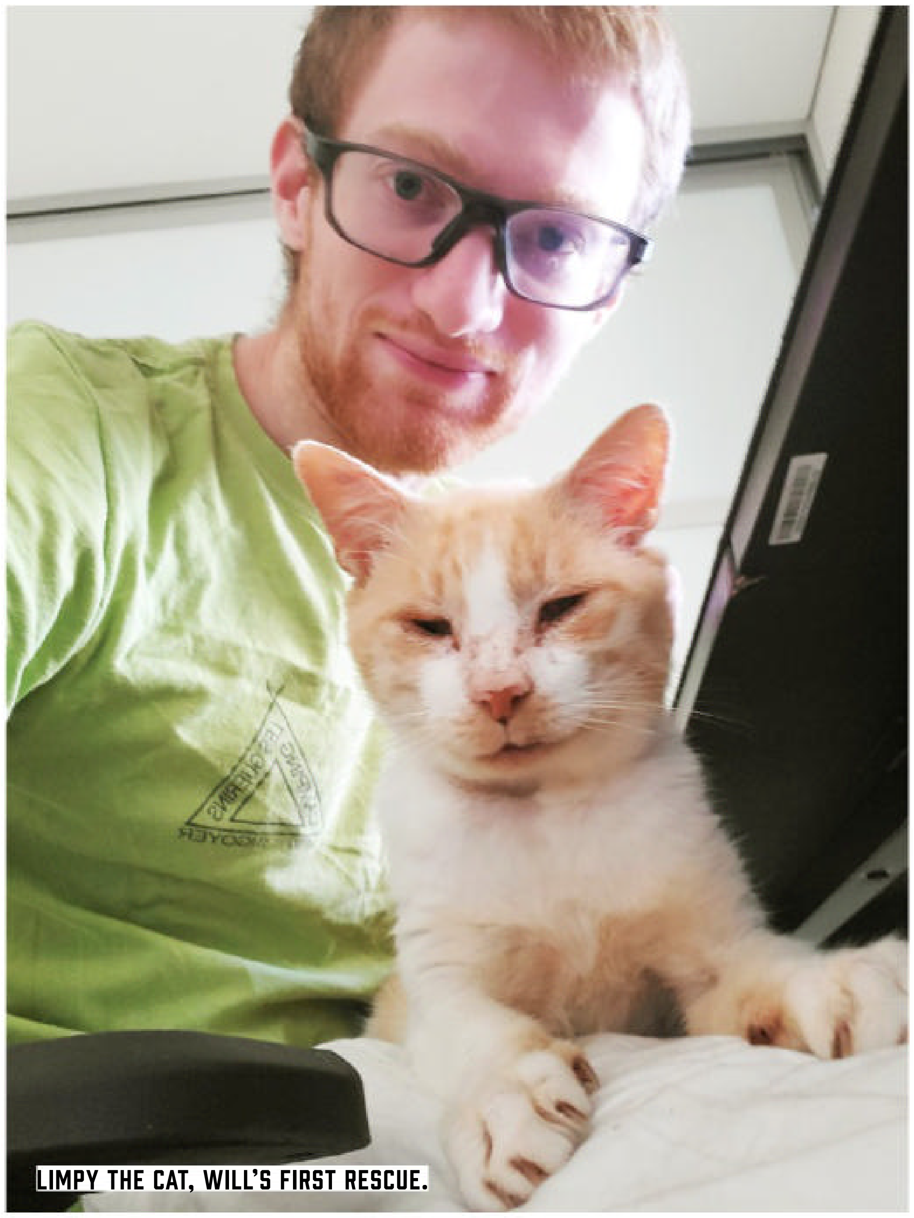
I posted again on Sydney Climbers, this time asking if anyone else would like to be guided in exchange for paying for a vet bill. Several people got back to me, some just donated or became a foster carer. By the end of the year we had rescued, treated and rehomed 70 cats.

I realised this is what I wanted to do in life. I could volunteer-climb with people for donations towards vet bills, while supporting myself on my pension. I registered William Skea's Animal Rescues as a not-for-profit charity in August 2020. Since then I've raised thousands of dollars towards medical treatment, and other expenses, for the cats through mentoring people on rock and in the mountains.

What is your focus for the future?

I'm continuing my guiding training in New Zealand with the NZMGA. Since I spent most of my time climbing in North America, I need to spend the next two years climbing in NZ to complete their in-country prerequisites before beginning with them. Once I'm certified under the NZMGA, I'll be able to run guided trips overseas.

With the rescue, I'm looking to expand our shelter's capacity from 10 to 30 cats at a time. My partner Natalie and I currently have a small shelter in the Blue Mountains that we use as a quarantine room while they recover from medical treatments and recieve social rehabilitation, before they're ready for foster care and adoption. We are saving up to buy a 2-bedroom house to convert into an indoor shelter.



LIMPY THE CAT, WILL'S FIRST RESCUE.

Fave crag snack?

Salted butter sticks while ice climbing—they taste like candy when it's -40 outside and anything without fat is frozen solid!

Mountaineering snack?

Peanut butter m&ms are equal parts sugar, fat, and protein. Natalie and I took a bag for climbing Mount Aspiring and accidentally ate them all on the approach, leaving us with only three muesli bars between us for the 12-hour summit push.

First mountain you ever climbed?

The Footstool, NZ.

Dream mountain you've always wanted to climb?

I've always wanted to free climb Trango Tower. I love big-wall climbing more than anything.

Most important skills a beginner alpinist needs?

Take a self-rescue course!.

What do your parents think of all this?

Mum and dad have always supported me, from booking a one-way flight to Los Angeles to starting a cat rescue charity. I still use them as my InReach emergency contact.

WHAT IS ADVENTURE?

For generations, adventure has been in our blood.
It's taken us to new heights and pushed us to new limits.
But what is adventure?
It's in all of us but it's different for everyone.

FIND YOURS AT MOUNTAINDESIGNS.COM

MOUNTAIN DESIGNS

EST. 1975 | BORN OF THE MOUNTAINS

THE CRACK

BEING BORED IS A GOOD THING

This was my self-created reality: a constant, uneasy sensation of jet lag. My mind had become so constantly overstimulated that I realised I had stopped dreaming, that my capacity to be creative had stalled.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY BY KRYSTLE WRIGHT

My far-flung ideas – that I've conjured up on a whim and pursued until the ends of the Earth – have given me some of my greatest joys as a visual artist. These ideas give me the motivation to try to stand out in an industry bombarded – by the onslaught of social media and pretty images that lack story and imagination. The insane volume and velocity of this content being created propels us into the weird concept that we must be creating something new all the fucking time. But we don't.

I think that great images are few and far between. When I embark on a passion project, I want to invest the time to attempt new ideas – whether it's accessing a difficult angle or incorporating lighting – and at least try to create an image different to those that have previously been captured at this specific location. I don't always have that luxury, and I realise other creatives have certain constraints too – time, budget, clients. But I believe it's so important for any artist to carve out personal time and push the boundaries. Do something new, so you don't end up recycling the same image that we've seen a thousand times before. These pursuits haven't always ended in success for me. But even through those failures, striving for something unusual, something creative, has always provided me with an opportunity to evolve.

Growing up in rural Sunshine Coast, Queensland, my siblings and I were encouraged to solve our own boredom. Vividly I can remember retreating to my sketchbook, reading, climbing trees, or simply basking in the warmth of the morning sun and letting my mind drift. Often I would get lost in fantasy novels as I indulged in day dreams and imagined finite details of a foreign reality. These reflections made me realise the simple pleasure in letting the mind wander.

Such opportunities have to be fought for in my life now. When I go to the pub, I love a good conversation, and as an Australian I love my beer cold. But all too often there is a gigantic screen hanging above the table, playing mindless content that derails any hope of enjoying a flowing conversation. I must also point the finger of blame at myself. In still moments, more often than I care to admit, I would catch myself bringing out my phone and falling into an endless doomsday scroll. My frequent travel, chasing work, only compounded this. It all blurred together into a constant rolling present without breathing space for my own thoughts.

Even as the world returns to a familiarity that we've been accustomed to, I've implemented a few boundaries for myself. No longer will I plan up to 12 months in advance with work – instead I've returned to a slower pace, with fewer plans, and the chance of spontaneity excites me. The balance of screen time is a constant battle.

One of my favourite things to do is watch the river outside my place. When the sea breeze stirs the glassy surface into a dance of ripples, I know the conditions are prime for my local cave at Mount Coolum. The distinctly shaped hexagonal rhyolite creates a unique thuggery style of climbing up the steep horns. Over the past year I dreamt up some loose ideas of lighting the home crag. The ideas slowly simmered in my mind.

On one particular day, driving to the crag, I had a eureka moment out of the blue – and the idea evolved into a new chapter. Why not take lighting into a crack on a climb? Instantly I knew that I needed to return to my desert oasis of Moab, Utah, for its world-class sandstone cracks.

A few months later, my fingers are feverishly working through the crack of Seventh Serpent, weaving the LED light tape through the twists and turns. There are moments of insecurity as I question my process, question the insane amount of work and time I am investing to create a singular image. There's a heatwave on and it's still hot despite being late in the day. Will this idea work? Have I travelled half a world to come away empty-handed? But my stubbornness refocuses my attention back to the task at hand. I am racing the daylight to finish the rigging. My dear friend Angela Vanwiemeersch, a talented climbing athlete, has placed her trust in my vision and has offered to join me for this artistic venture – it's the ultimate compliment to my process.

My obsession with the blue hour has had a firm hold over me for the majority of my career. I watch the magic come alive as lingering light resonates on these iconic sandstone cliffs. Darkness begins to grow across the empty sky. Angela and I have the canyon to ourselves – no other sane person would venture out, let alone climb, in the heatwave. As the ambient light ebbs away minute by minute, the amber glow of the LEDs grows ever brighter, and the click-click-click of my camera signals a creative project coming to full fruition.

You might think that upon completion of this project I would rush these images to publication, but instead I've sat and meditated with them for the past few months. For my process to come full circle, it's crucial that I take the time to sit with the results. After all, I pour blood, sweat, and tears into each of my passion projects – why not take a moment to revel in the process? I've never been a photographer who is technically acute, as I'd rather lose myself to the creative process, but I've come to realise that the real technique for me is the passion I invest.

At the end of this process, all I can think is this: I'm so glad my boredom brought me back.

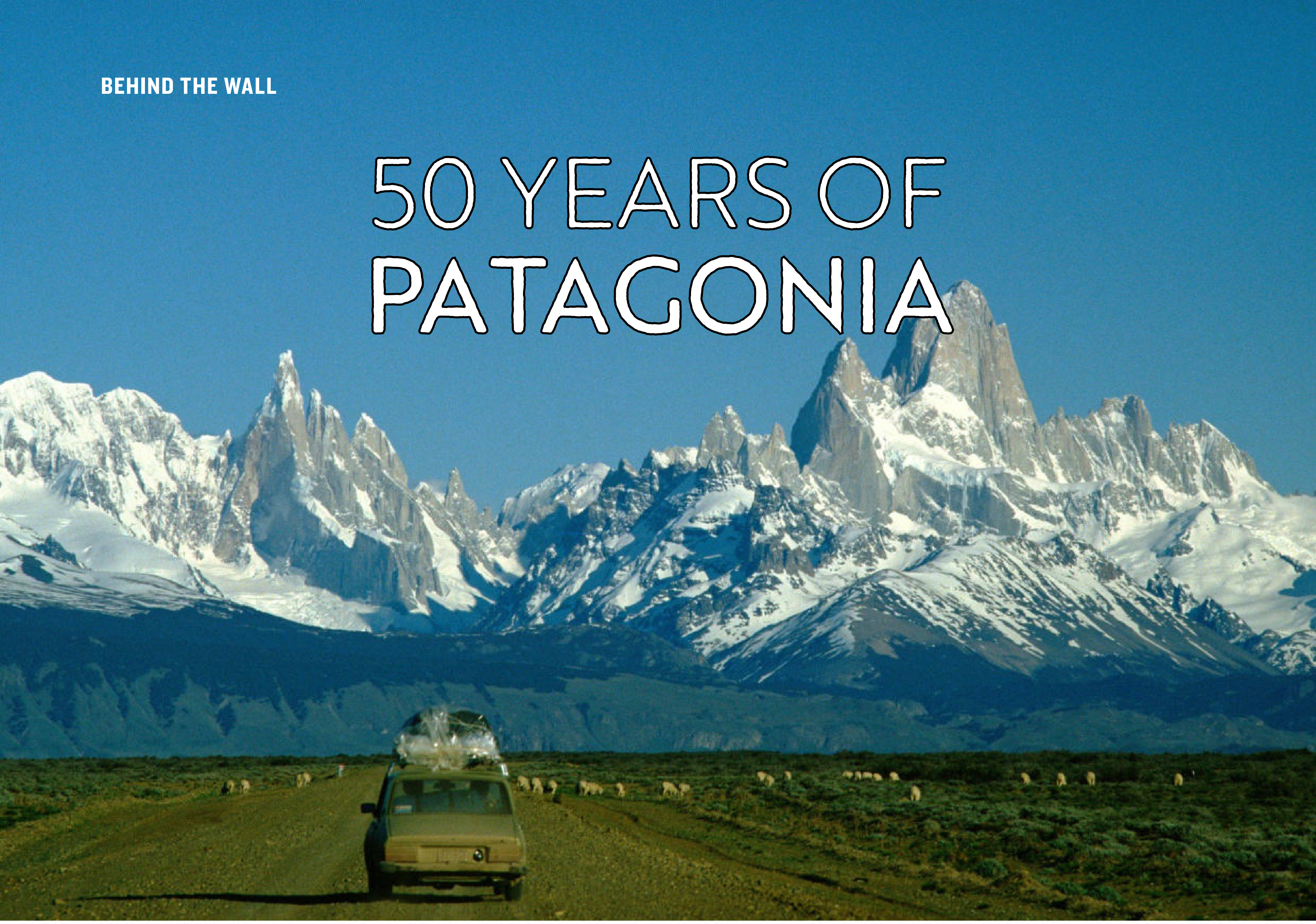
@krystlejwright // krystlewright.com

Krystle's work has rightfully made waves overseas, and we're stoked to bring a piece of it to our own climbing community this edition.

'The Crack' was originally published in Volume 25 of Sidetracked Magazine. In the spirit of creating connections across borders, we've worked with Krystle and the Sidetracked team to bring it to print here at home. We have republished the article as it originally appeared in Sidetracked, and offer our gratitude to Alex Roddie and John Summerton who made it possible. Krystle's work has rightfully made waves overseas, and we're stoked to bring a piece of it to our own climbing community this edition. In our discussions with Krystle about republishing her photo essay, she let us know that she's planning some epic projects here at home. We can't wait to see what she creates.

STANLEY
SINCE 1913
BUILT FOR LIFE™
LIFETIME WARRANTY
stanley1913.com.au

50 YEARS OF PATAGONIA



We've created the Behind The Wall column to give our readers a backstage pass into the inner workings of the climbing industry here in Australia and New Zealand. In creating our mag, we have the privilege of working with the climbing industry's behind-the-scenes unsung heroes who power the sport we love. From the brand names we love, to our local gyms and entrepreneurs who have turned their love of climbing into their livelihoods; our industry is teaming with creatives, professionals, and professional-dirtbags alike, each with their own incredible story. We think it's time we started telling them.

To kick us off, The Patagonia team take our Managing Editor Coz backstage on their "What's Next?" work. We reflect on what they've achieved as they "mark the halfway point in their 100-year experiment"-- but perhaps more importantly, look towards the future and what the next 50 years must hold.

HEADER IMAGE: HEADING TOWARDS FITZROY, PATAGONIA 1968. PHOTO: BARBARA ROWELL.

The story of Yvon Chouinard's journey to founding Patagonia reads like a movie script full of adventure, determination and ultimately, creativity. From his initial introduction to climbing in 1953 by abseiling down cliffsides to reach falcon aeries as a teen member of the Southern California Falconry Club, to teaching himself to climb Yosemite's big walls with the likes of now icons T.M. Herbert, Royal Robbins and Tom Frost, and hiding from the rangers in the boulders above Camp 4 after overstaying the two-week camping limit. The story has all the hallmarks of a dirtbag-antihero-esque blockbuster hit about a group of friends having too much fun climbing to realise that they're each in the company of the very people who would go on to make sport and industry history.

While the world has changed a lot over the last 50 years, Patagonia's drive to conduct ethical and sustainable business has remained steadfast. For decades, Patagonia has been well-loved by the outdoor community for their uncompromising environmental values, mastery of effortless design and vivid colour palette. Whether you're at the gym, the crag or on the commute in between, you don't have to turn your head too far in either direction to spot a climber in Patagonia kit.

Infamous for their support of environmental campaigns and grassroots activism, the brand made headlines in September last year with news of their dramatic change in ownership structure.Demonstrating that a for-profit business can shift the needle on capitalism to make it work for the planet, Patagonia articulated the change as "going purpose" instead of "going public". As a result, ownership of Patagonia was transferred to two new entities: Patagonia Purpose Trust and the nonprofit Holdfast Collective, with every dollar not reinvested into Patagonia to be distributed as dividends to protect the planet.

As a climber who's also spent the better part of their adult life as both an organiser and organisational structure lead in the environmental and climate movements here in Australia, the depth and breadth of what this announcement means beyond the headlines weren't lost on me. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't tempted to write an essay on the benefits and limitations of not-for-profit governance structures in for-purpose contexts, and how Patagonia's restructure could change the game, but this is neither the time nor place for that (*Forbes, call me*). However, this is the perfect place to reflect on how one climber's passion to do business differently, set into motion a series of ripple effects that over the last 50 years, have enabled the Patagonia of today to look towards the next 50 with a focus on saving our planet.

For the climbing community, there's nothing that galvanises us more than the success of other climbers. Whether it's as dramatic as athletes pushing the boundaries of our collective capabilities to redefine what's possible, or a little closer to home when a mate finally stops punting their crux sequence to send the proj. You'll always find another climber cheering them on. It's this shared connection over the complexities of a sport that looks so abstract from the outside, and a deep understanding of what it takes–sacrifice as an inevitable precursor to success–in the pursuit of climbing, that rallies our community around Patagonia's story.

More than most, climbers know what it's like to be so determined to achieve a goal that we wouldn't hesitate to pull out all the stops to achieve it–but what if I told you that Patagonia's founder Yvon Chouinard got started in gear manufacturing under that same premise? In 1957 he bought a coal-fired forge on a trip to a junkyard and set about learning how to blacksmith, eventually making his first pitons from an old harvester blade. Determined to climb, he and T.M Herbert tested them out on early ascents of Yosemite's big walls, and it was the sales of these pitons that funded his climbing and travel in those early years.

Personally, I've set some pretty audacious goals for myself. At the time, I'd have been willing to try, learn and do anything to turn them into reality, but I'll admit that becoming a blacksmith as part of the process didn't even cross my mind. *That's probably the small difference between us that's put Chouinard's on the Forbes billionaire's list and me on the editorial list of a small rock climbing magazine at the arse-end-of-the-world...*

Likewise, scrounging around at the bottom of our eskies to slap together a meal resembling dinner on the last day of the climbing trip is a wildly relatable occurrence–heck, so relatable in fact that we've got a recipe to help you do just that at the end of the mag. So central to the full dirtbag experience is the racoon-level food rummage, that 50 years ago while preparing for a trip to the Rockies, Yvon used the slim profits from his car boot piton sales to buy two dented cases of canned cat tuna from a damaged-can outlet (*do we have those here? I'm asking on behalf of all the Pines Easter road trippers*) and supplemented his food supply with oats, spuds, poached ground squirrels and porcupines to get through the trip.

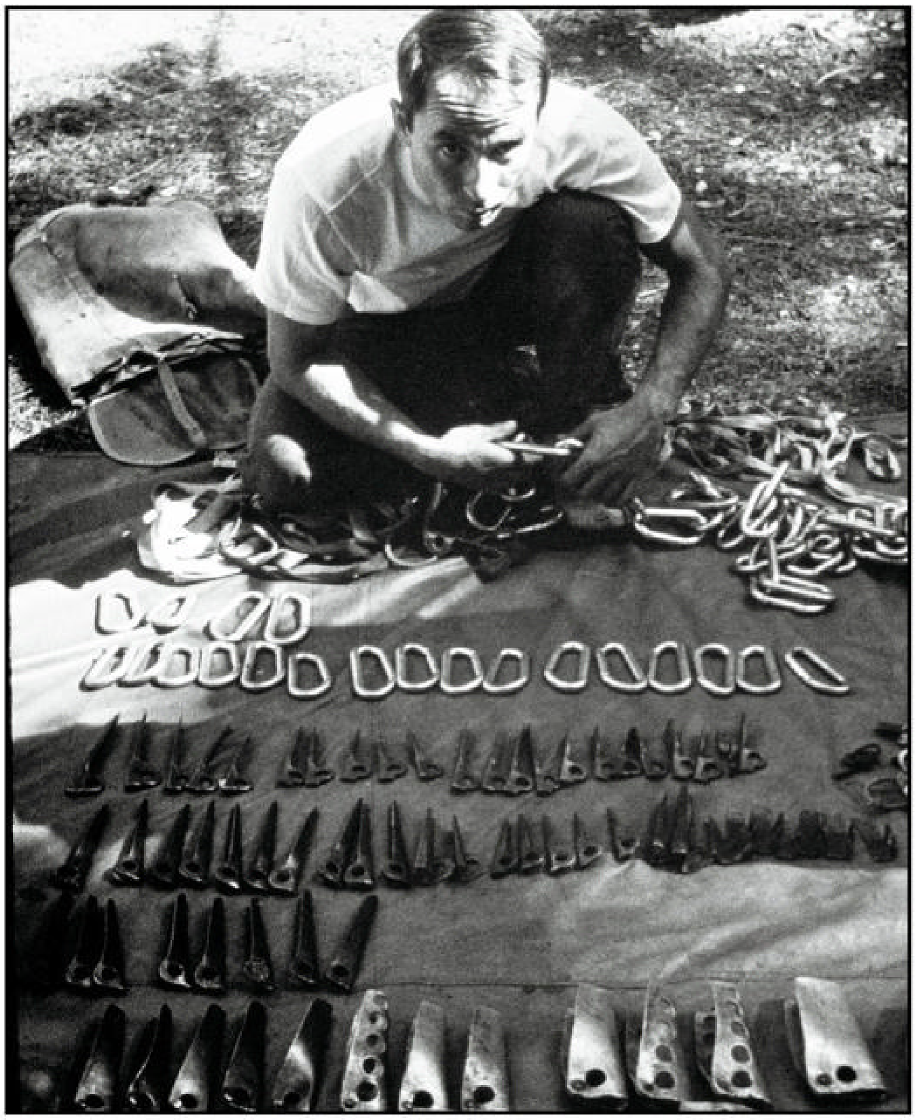
Yvon, mate, it's no still-in-date six-pack of hot cross buns from the definitely unlocked Bakers Delight dumpster, but it'd do the job I guess.

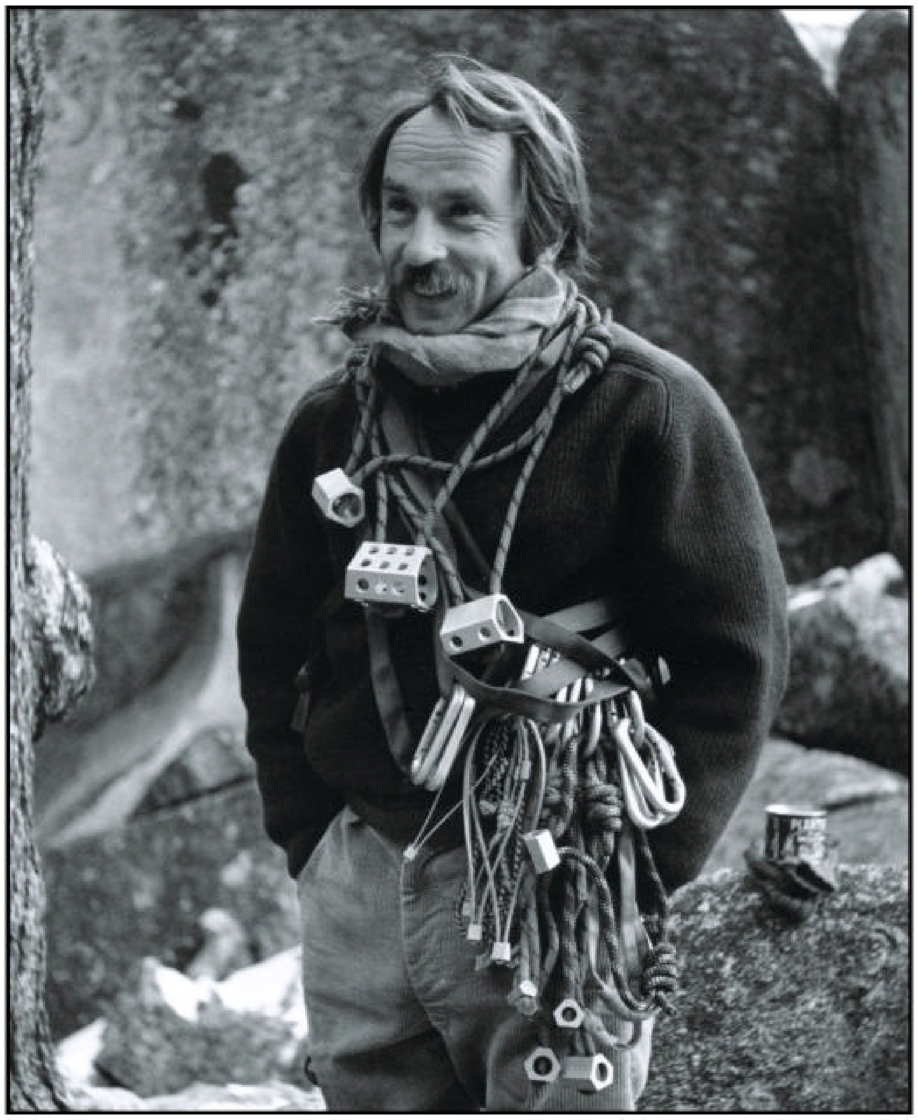
IMAGE OF LOR SABOURIN IN RED RIVER GORGE, KENTUCKY.
SHOT BY ANDREW BUTT AND SUPPLIED BY PATAGONIA

"Right now, we are facing monumental challenges in social and environmental justice, and learning to build relationships to work towards shared goals is more important than ever. Climbing and other adventure sports teach us a lot about being in brave relationships with others and being creative to solve problems.

Sometimes, I think that folks get confused when we talk about advocacy and activism, thinking that it's all about telling other people what they are doing wrong. I've been inspired by Patagonia's focus on building partnerships and coalitions to move towards shared goals. It's important to be able to see everyone involved as a human with a story and using that as a starting point to figure out how we can all get on the same playing field and work together."

–Lor Sabourin, Patagonia climbing ambassador.





There's no two ways about it, Yvon Chouinard was a dirtbag in the truest sense. Though by 1965, the quality of the gear that this dirtbag was hand-forging on his travels or from his parent's backyard, became so popular that an upgrade was needed–and Chouinard Equipment was born. Partnered with Tom Frost they redesigned and improved almost every climbing tool over the nine years of their operation, with the purpose of making them lighter, simpler and more functional. The drive for quality that led them to become the largest supplier of climbing hardware in the United States by 1970, would go on to lay the groundwork for Patagonia's core values in the decades that followed.

Similarly, understanding the environmental impacts that their pitons were having on the fragile cracks they loved climbing saw them make their first environmentally conscious decision in the minimisation of the piton business. This decision became another catalyst for the future core values of Patagonia. Chouinard and Frost turned their environmental consciousness into a revolutionary breakthrough in climbing gear in 1972, with their invention of aluminium chocks that could be wedged into cracks by hand as opposed to hammered; an advancement that we still benefit from today. It's the creative approach to environmental problem-solving and a willingness to do their part that's led Patagonia to make regular donations to grassroots groups working to save or restore habitat since that time. Here at home, Patagonia has supported 61 grassroots environmental groups as part of their giving-back initiative, with the full list available on their website.

Turning that same solutions-focused approach to problem-solving to apparel, Patagonia's list of gear innovations continued to grow throughout the 70s and 80s, with inspiration to innovate coming directly from adventure. From his Scottish winter climbing trip in 1970, Chouinard took inspiration from a rugby shirt to stop trad-sling-chafe, and from the staple synthetic pile of North Atlantic fishermen's sweaters, the foundations for the first insulated and moisture-absorbing layer were laid. In 1980, Patagonia gave us polypropylene underwear and they continued to innovate until they developed Synchilla®, an even softer, double-faced fabric that didn't pill.

Capilene® polyester was born in 1984, spurring a quest to continue its investment in material improvements as part of its ongoing commitment to reduce its role as a global polluter. Since the 80s they've been transparent about their efforts to use recycled materials and eliminating the coloured dyes that required toxic sulfides and dyes. Switching to using only organic cotton in 1996, Patagonia recently upped the ante with their commitment to a new Regenerative Organic Certified standard, and circular fabrics like Netplus, made of reclaimed fishing nets and ocean waste.

From humble beginnings as one person hand hammering a few pitons to benefit his own climbing, to working in collaboration with other climbers, adventurers, experts and activists to tackle global environmental manufacturing concerns, Patagonia has blazed a pretty impressive trail over the last 50 years.

Reflecting on this as Patagonia's founder, previous owner and current board member, Yvon Chouinard is serious when he says, "*It's been a half-century since we began our experiment in responsible business. If we have any hope of a thriving planet 50 years from now, it demands all of us doing all we can with the resources we have. As the business leader I never wanted to be, I*

am doing my part. Instead of extracting value from nature and transforming it into wealth, we are using the wealth Patagonia creates to protect the source. We're making Earth our only shareholder. I am dead serious about saving this planet."

And so he should be. With over a decade in Australia's grassroots environmental movements myself, I can personally attest to the level of urgency that solutions to the impacts of climate change and environmental justice are needed.

The first half of Patagonia's 100 year experiment proves that without a doubt when climbers come together to think creatively and consciously, we're capable of creating history and change in our sport and beyond. If I've learnt anything over the years, it's that people power is a very real power and that the role of funding grassroots changemakers, disruptors and organisations is absolutely vital in shifting the needle. As Patagonia looks to the future, they remain committed to using its business and voice to upend extractive capitalism as we know it and to use its resources to regenerate the Earth's ecosystems. Its work to empower and grow a community of environmental activists and responsible product owners continues, as does its effort to increase all people's connection to nature and community through sport.

Patagonia's story reminds us that together we have a very real collective power and capacity for good, and that climbing plays a deeper role in giving us the ability to tap into this power than what we probably give it credit for.

In the company's words...

What's next?

It's time to ditch growth for growth's sake.
Let's make things that last longer.
And do more with what we already have.
Let's find joy in protecting the land and waters that have always nurtured us.
And revel in their beauty, open spaces, magic.
Together, we can support communities in harm's way, and save this wondrous, resilient planet, our only home.
We're all in. You?
What's next is unstoppable.
Next is saving our home planet.

THEN (left page):
Yvon Chouinard gets his start in business in the '60s. Yosemite, California. (left).

Experiencing first-hand how the pitons he forged were damaging the rocks he climbed, Patagonia Founder Yvon Chouinard began making and selling removable climbing protection, like these Hexentrics and Stoppers. Yosemite, California. (Right). Photos by Tom Frost.

NOW (this page):
High schoolscience teacher and track coach Eddie Taylor taking a lap on the Naked Edge in Eldorado Canyon. The Cameron Peak fire raged across northern Colorado for much of that summer, burning over a thousand across of land. In class Eddie teaches his students about climate change, while on the field he fosters the grit and teamwork they'll need to tackle it, so that their own cragging days in Eldo might be less smoke-filled. Photo James Lucas.

Tale OF WOAH

TRIBUTE

Climbing safety is everyone's responsibility and it's something our editorial team are incredibly passionate about. Our regular Tale of Woah column is our continued commitment to creating a culture of safety within our community. By providing a place for established climbing professionals to deconstruct teachable moments from accidents and near-miss moments, our hope is that our readers will lift the lessons off our pages and put them into practice at the crag.

With Dyurrite and Gariwerd popular Easter and autumn climbing destinations amongst climbers, Louise Shepherd's careful analysis of an accident resulting from exhaustion, serves as a poignant reminder that rest is critical.

SUNRISE OVER THE PINES AT DYURRITE/MOUNT ARAPALIES.
SHOT BY *MITCHELL SCANLAN-BLOOR*

It was the third of January 2023. The new year had barely begun, and Bob was already tired and aching from four days of projecting a difficult route at Dyurrite/Arapiles. He needed a rest day but he'd already arranged to meet Helen for a five-day climbing trip in Gariwerd/Grampians. Meeting up at the Hollow Mountain car park, they discussed various options. Bob thought he might do a warm-up route and gauge how he felt, but he was fairly sure he wouldn't jump on anything hard.

Helen was keen on a project at Van Dieman's Land, and he was happy to belay. On the way there, they passed under Lower Tribute, a popular moderate sport climbing area. Bob spontaneously suggested warming up there. When they scrambled up, they found several parties already climbing.

Helen led Maiden China, a 15 metre high grade 15 sport route. Then Bob led it on her draws. Once on the rock, he realised how exhausted he was. At the top, he prepared to thread the anchor. For years, he had clipped in directly to the anchors with two draws, secured the rope, untied, threaded the anchors and tied back in. But many sport climbers these days consider it safer to push a bight of rope through the anchors, tie a figure 8 or overhand and clip the knot to their belay loop, and then untie and be lowered. Bob had recently switched to this second method to thread the anchors.

Pushing the bight of rope through the anchors was a tight fit. Bob reached for his spare locking 'biner and realised it was on the ground. He had only one locker and that had his grigri on it. The locking 'biner was a DMM rhino, which has a little metal flap in it to prevent cross-loading. Distracted by the grigri and grappling with the 'biner, Bob failed to tie a knot. Instead, he just clipped into the open loop to his locking 'biner. He untied, told Helen to take him tight and unclipped his PAS (Personal Anchor System). Normally, Bob would've double-checked everything was okay before unclipping his PAS, but in his fatigued and inattentive state, he failed to do this crucial last step.

Helen took in the rope tight and felt the resistance of a bight of rope squeezed snugly through two anchors. This deluded both climber and belayer that all was normal. However, the instant Bob fully weighted the rope, everything gave, the end of the rope whizzed through the anchors and he hurtled 15 metres towards the ground. He desperately tried to grab the rope, but failed.

The base of Maiden China is not flat; it's a narrow slot. Bob landed down in the slot, cutting his head open. Blood gushed everywhere. However, Bob was lucky in this respect; the cut was superficial and he sustained no brain injuries. Three vertebrae were damaged, two in his neck and one in his spine. His right heel and left wrist were broken, but the worst damage was to his left foot. The left heel had taken the brunt of the impact and the bones were totally shattered.

Luckily, one of the climbers at the scene was a nurse; she bandaged Bob's head wound, which controlled the bleeding. More importantly, she was calm and reassuring in a scenario where panic could've made things worse. Someone called 000 and asked for ambulance officers and a helicopter evacuation.

Two climbers from Natimuk, both emergency service volunteers qualified in rope rescue, went to assist on the ground. They drove to the car park and started walking in, carrying heavy packs full of cliff rescue equipment. On the track, one of them heard his phone ping, and checked the sms, hoping it was from another volunteer who could help carry the load. Whilst distracted, he tripped, landed heavily, and broke and dislocated his shoulder. Being January and holiday season for surgeons, he has been unable to get treatment. More than five weeks later, he is still in pain and waiting.

Emergency service organisations are fully aware that rescuers are themselves at risk. Injuries and even deaths have occurred. Two years ago at Dyurrite, during a helicopter rescue from an awkward ledge three metres above the ground, one of the paramedics had a small bag with a tagline in his pocket. One end of the tagline was tied onto the stretcher while the rest of the line trickled out from the bag in his pocket. The line jammed and jerked the rescuer almost off his feet. Fortunately, the bag popped out of his pocket in a nick of time. If he'd lost his footing and been dragged off the narrow ledge, he could've been a secondary casualty.

At Tribute, Bob was loaded into a stretcher and winched into the helicopter five hours after the initial call-out. Five weeks after the accident, he was discharged from hospital. He sent me a photo of himself. He is sitting in a wheelchair wearing a neck and back brace. His head has twenty staples in it. His wrist and one foot are in casts, while the other foot is in a moon boot. He is on painkillers constantly and needs help to do everything.

Bob's dad is caring for him pretty much full-time. Bob feels a deep gratitude to his dad, the climbers at the scene, the rescuers, and the hospital staff. His main concern for the future is his left foot. Once the swelling has diminished, the surgeon wants to fuse his shattered bones, meaning he will have a rigid inflexible foot for the rest of his life, making it difficult or impossible to walk, climb, scramble on uneven ground, and do yoga. He is considering his options.

The events described have actually happened, but the names of climbers have been changed. The images used for this column are unrelated to the incidents described.

ANALYSIS AND PREVENTION

- **Bob has a vivid memory of the third of January, and has had plenty of downtime to analyse the events preceding the accident.** He said the overarching factor was fatigue, muscular soreness, and not feeling psyched to climb. He needed a rest day. At the same time, he had a pre-arranged climbing trip with Helen that he was committed to. At the anchors, he was distracted by fiddling with the locking biner and the grigri, and failed to complete the task of putting a knot in the rope. Finally, he unclipped his safety PAS before doing a last check.

- **The proximate cause of the accident is obvious: Bob failed to tie a knot in the rope and clip into it.** However, physical and emotional fatigue cannot be underestimated as the underlying reason for many climbing accidents. That is why emergency call-outs frequently occur towards the end of the day when climbers are on their last route, either climbing, descending or retreating.

- **I was struck by the fact that Bob's accident happened on the very first route of the day.** It indicates he had an overwhelming need to rest. At one level, Bob was aware of this and had decided not to push himself. Maiden China is a short sport route, the easiest climb on the wall. Once he got to the anchors, Bob's focus was dissipated by fiddling with the grigri and the annoying locking 'biner.

- **Rock climbing, like all human endeavours, occurs within a social context.** Once we don our harness, whether climbing or belaying, we owe it to ourselves and others to pay attention. But we cannot escape the fact that climbing has many repetitive actions, and once we are familiar with them, we can cease to be vigilant.

- **Herein lies the horns of the dilemma.** The cliff is an unforgiving arena. The sword of Damocles is always suspended above us, and it is attached by the slenderest of threads. We neglect it because we cannot do otherwise. Close calls and accidents remind us just how perilously close we are to the abyss.

About the writer:

LOUISE SHEPHERD | Louise (also known as Lou, she/her) has been climbing for 40 years and guiding for 35 years. Back in the 70s, there was no trad or sport, it was all just climbing and the culture was to toss beginners in at the deep end. Louise survived this brutal baptism and now teaches trad lead climbing rather differently than the way she was taught. She works with The Climbing Company now based in Naarm, Melbourne.

flip
insurance

Adventure more.
Stress less.

Pay-as-you-go insurance for **$6 a day** or **$9 a week.**
Get cash payouts (up to $20K) for accidental injuries that happen whilst you're covered.

Flip it on

getflip.com.au

Read the PDS and TMD at getflip.com.au. Issued by HCF.

Mindset RESET

WORDS BY DR KATE BAECHER

For those looking for guidance to improve their physical climbing ability, there's a wealth of knowledge at our fingertips. Qualified climbing coaches are more accessible now than at any other time in our sport, and as a result, there's a seemingly unlimited amount of ways to ask for help. From 1:1 sessions at your local gym, physical books, apps, digital channels, and e-books, to easily digestible Instagram content –the barrier isn't access to this help anymore, it's how to sieve through it all to find the right help for you.

What we don't find as often though, is clear and credible guidance on how we can train our brains for the complexities of climbing. Conversations around mental health in our sport often ebb and flow, circling around climbing incidents that have resulted in severe outcomes. Over the years, a familiar pattern has emerged. The flow starts in the wake of the incident with anecdotes from athletes as community members grapple with what's happened from a safety perspective. As the dust settles, we hear and think little about the ongoing mental health impacts of climbing and a collective unpacking of the incident, outside a handful of athletes and writers dedicated to regularly speaking openly about their own experiences.

So why is there such a clear gap between our collective desire to train our bodies proactively and our brains reactively? One explanation may be that because climbing doesn't exist in a vacuum, our community is not exempt from the stigmatisation of mental health conversations, which keeps mental training lower on our collective priority list. Other explanations could be a lack of accessible and qualified information, or just not knowing where to start.

Here at VL we've committed to taking our mindsets as seriously as we take our safety, which is why we're launching our new mindset reset column with mountaineer and psychologist, Dr Kate Baecher. In her inaugural Vertical Life column, Kate examines how to recover mentally after a traumatic incident or injury and provides guidance on when to seek help.

In 2018, I was climbing in Pakistan when a friend fell down a 40 metre crevasse. Luckily we managed to rescue him and he was helicoptered to a military hospital. He spent a few days in ICU, but was largely intact when he was discharged.

It took me over six months to work through the emotions of that situation and finally feel like myself again. But it wasn't until I was back in the mountains three years later, this time in Uganda, when a cacophony of memories washed over me leaving me in tears for days. It was the smells, I think, that triggered it… You know the ones I'm talking about? The distinct smell of everyone on expeditions, the aroma of unwashed clothes for days (or weeks) on end.

What on earth was going on?

Imagine that you're confidently leading a grade 21 when you take a whipper… You're injured, but survive.
Imagine that you are the belayer and it's the first large fall that you've witnessed and caught.
Imagine if you are a spectator and observe that situation.
Imagine if you didn't see what happened, but just heard the screams from the other end of the crag.
Imagine if you witness an incident that you have no control over, and the person is winched to (physical) safety but becomes a ghost of themselves; and you were the person who suggested the outing.

What happens inside of you? How do you respond, not just then, but over the next days, months and years?

Let's talk about trauma, particularly in the context of climbing.

Any event that involves exposure to actual or threatened death, or serious injury has the potential to be traumatic. Almost everyone who experiences an event trauma will be emotionally affected, but

not everyone will respond in the same way. Most people will recover within the first week or two with the help of family and friends. For some however, the effects can be longer-lasting.

Traumatic events are very common. Most people will experience at least one traumatic event in their life, whether it is having someone close to them die unexpectedly, seeing someone badly injured or killed, or unexpectedly seeing a dead body. The nature of climbing increases the possibility of being exposed to a potentially traumatic event, whether you are personally injured or witness an accident, from a near-miss whipper, a landslip on the walk-in, or a bad fall resulting in broken limbs.

Potentially traumatic events are often overwhelming, particularly when they occur in an activity that you feel like you generally have some control over. They can make it hard for people to think through and come to terms with what has happened. The experience may be very different to anything you have been through before; it can be hard to make sense of what has happened, and sometimes it makes people doubt things they have always believed in, especially when it comes to a passion like climbing.

What might it feel like?

When you experience a traumatic event, it is normal to have strong emotional or physical reactions which remain after the event is over. These reactions can take days or weeks to subside. Common reactions related to traumatic stress include:

PHYSICAL - Fatigue/exhaustion, nausea, muscle tremors, twitches, difficulty breathing, elevated blood pressure, rapid heart rate, dizziness, profuse sweating, chills, and disturbed sleep.

COGNITIVE - Confusion, poor concentration and attention, poor decisions, heightened or lowered alertness, memory problems, hypervigilance, difficulty identifying familiar objects or people, increased or decreased awareness of surroundings, disturbed thinking, nightmares, and intrusive thoughts.

EMOTIONAL - Anxiety, guilt, grief, denial, shock, fear, uncertainty, loss of emotional control, low mood, feeling overwhelmed, anger, irritability, agitation, emotional numbness and detachment, and oversensitivity.

BEHAVIOURAL - Change in activity levels and energy/ restlessness, emotional outbursts, suspiciousness, change in usual communications, loss or increase of appetite, increased alcohol consumption, inability to rest, nonspecific bodily complaints, hyperalert to the environment, easily startled, and erratic movements.

As horrible as these are to experience, and as much as they can feel like you're in a chaotic washing machine, they are all absolutely normal, healthy reactions.

They are part of the natural healing process we go through, as the mind and body come to terms with what has occurred. The underlying psychological process is similar to digestion; the mind needs to take time to digest an overwhelming experience to make some sense of the event and put it into perspective.

There are, however, several things that you can do to help process the event, and the most effective ones are the simplest: eat regularly and healthily, implement a light exercise regime, get back to your normal daily routine so you have structure in your day, and understand that you'll be emotionally out of whack for a little while.

Be kind to yourself. Think about what you might say to a friend if they were going through the experience—then say that same thing to yourself. Allow yourself to feel everything, despite how uncomfortable that might be. Remind yourself daily that you can and are coping; don't be angry or impatient with yourself for being upset.

Don't try to block out thoughts of what has happened; gradually confronting what has happened will assist in coming to terms with the traumatic experience. On that note, avoidance is the worst option. As humans, we seek out pleasure and seek to avoid pain, and going back to the scene of the accident feels like it will cause pain. The truth is, it will in fact very likely cause some emotional pain, but this is often necessary for processing the incident. The longer you avoid the location, activity, people involved, the more distress may grow internally, and the more your trauma will start to inhibit your daily life.

If it was a climbing accident you are recovering from, going back to low-grade climbing, or just visiting the crag, can be an important step in moving through the trauma and allowing both your body and your mind to process what happened.

In most cases, the severity of the emotional chaos will reduce over the few weeks post-incident. If the severity of the chaos hasn't dissipated after around four weeks from the incident, it is worth having a chat with a mental health professional.

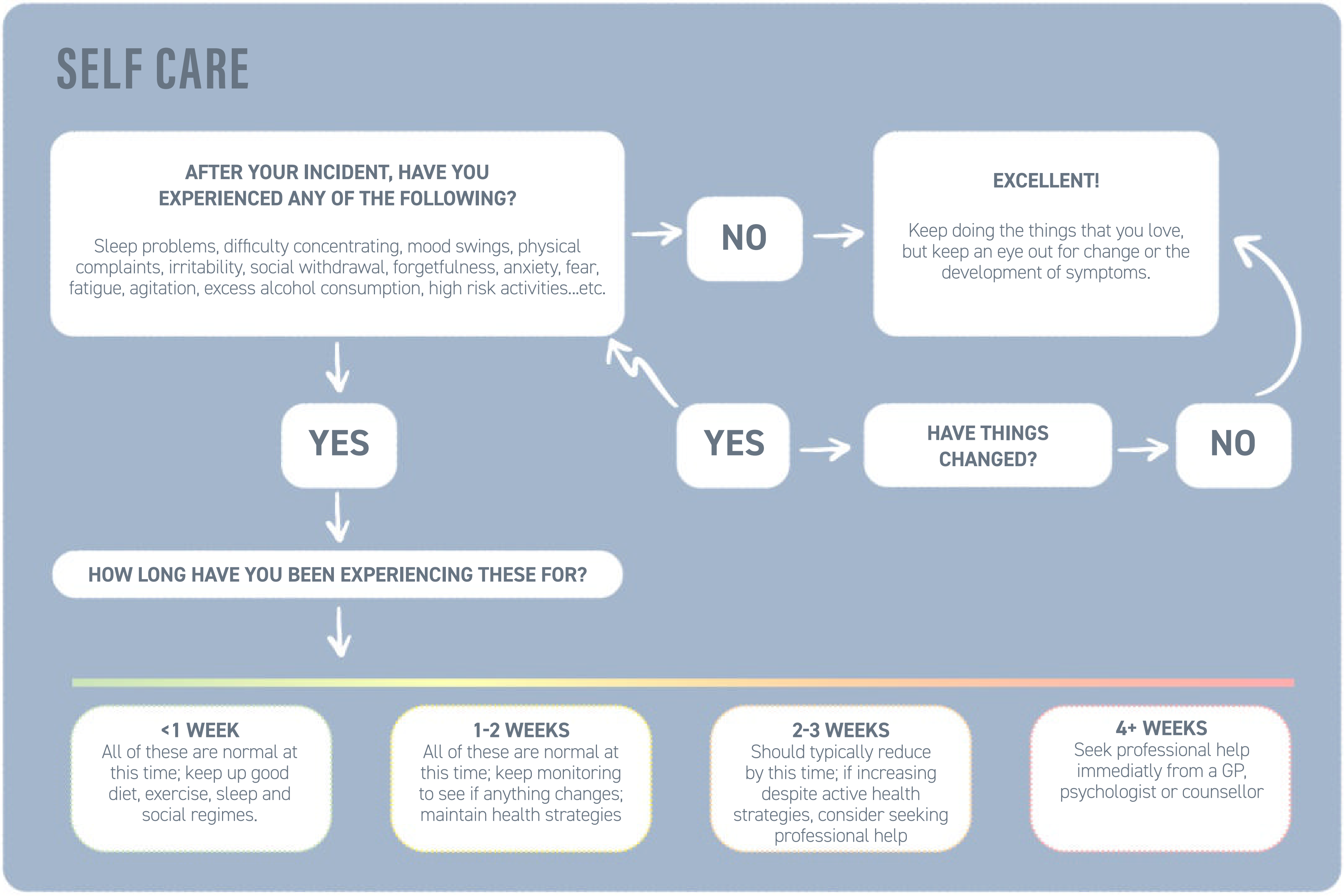
It is likely though that—regardless of the timeframe—when you do return to the activity that is associated with the trauma, you will initially experience a bit of fear and trepidation, and you might re-live what happened previously.

I spent those first few days when I returned to the mountains in Uganda trekking and climbing with tears pouring out of my eyes. Emotionally I felt okay, a little odd and out of sorts, and clearly my eyeballs were leaking fluids, but I definitely didn't feel traumatised.

After a couple of days I was fine and I realised that somehow my body had held onto the memories and brought them to the surface. What I had experienced was actually a healthy, normal part of being human.

The reason a traumatic response feels horrible is because it IS horrible. However, it is also a normal response to an abnormal situation. Recovery must be guided by the natural processes of the human mind when it comes to emotional processing and healing, which can take some time.

For a quick reference guide of when to consider seeking help, see the flowchart below.



SELF CARE

AFTER YOUR INCIDENT, HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?

Sleep problems, difficulty concentrating, mood swings, physical complaints, irritability, social withdrawal, forgetfulness, anxiety, fear, fatigue, agitation, excess alcohol consumption, high risk activities...etc.

NO

EXCELLENT!

Keep doing the things that you love, but keep an eye out for change or the development of symptoms.

YES

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EXPERIENCING THESE FOR?

<1 WEEK
All of these are normal at this time; keep up good diet, exercise, sleep and social regimes.

1-2 WEEKS
All of these are normal at this time; keep monitoring to see if anything changes; maintain health strategies

2-3 WEEKS
Should typically reduce by this time; if increasing despite active health strategies, consider seeking professional help

4+ WEEKS
Seek professional help immediatly from a GP, psychologist or counsellor

YES

HAVE THINGS CHANGED?

NO

About the writer:
DR KATE BAECHER | With over 15 years' experience, Kate is an accomplished Australian Clinical and Performance Psychologist, whose work specialises in the nexus between human behaviour and complex environments. Kate has a military and adventure background, with expertise in high-performance coaching, research and consulting on mental health risks in remote, wilderness, extreme and austere environments.

THERMOS
THERMOS
FREEZING. HOT.

Even on the coldest days, Genuine Thermos® Brand food and drink containers will keep contents hot for hours. The secret is Thermos™ vacuum insulation technology which virtually eliminates temperature change within the container. Genuine Thermos Brand has been trusted since 1904.

THERMOS is a registered trademark in over 115 countries. © 2016, 2021 Thermos PTY Ltd. **THERMOS.COM.AU**

24 HOURS HOT

24 HOURS COLD

NEW GEAR

THE NORTH FACE SUMMIT FUTUREFLEECE™ HOODED JACKET

If you've ever weighed all your gear and entered those weights into a dedicated spreadsheet, or even felt the desire to, then you're probably a weight-weenie! No shame, I'm in the weight weenie club too (no, we don't have matching jackets, they're too heavy).

So imagine my delight when I saw TNF's new FUTUREFLEECE™ hooded jacket weighed a mere 208g - it damn near broke my spreadsheet! Aside from the outstanding warmth-to-weight ratio, it also features flat lock stitching, seamless shoulder strap zones, integrated thumb loops, and the least offensive full zip I've ever worn under a harness (as a devout ¾ zip wearer).

Bonus: **The women's version is even lighter at 176g!**

EVOLV SHAMAN PRO

There is yet another addition to the Shaman family (in the best way possible). The Shaman Pro is a softer, more sensitive, and more 'pro-er' version of the current Shaman and Shaman lace shoes. Featuring Evolv's new Evo Wrap technology that hugs your foot like it just fell off the last move of its proj, meaning you don't have to downsize until your toenails drop off –unless you reeeaally want to. But fear not those who love to say 'they don't make em' like they used to' whilst shaking a closed fist in the air, Evolv didn't change too much! The new Pro model is everything you loved about the shamans, just with a more bouldering and comp-oriented flavour.

Bonus: **They actually do look pro-er.**

SCARPA INSTINCT S

Please welcome the newest kid on the Scarpa Instinct lineup, Mr S (not to be confused with Mr Schneebly). "What does the S stand for?" you might be wondering? Well, though the shoe is softer, stickier, and more sensitive-er, we suspect the S stands for slipper. Scarpa has brought the performance and precision of the regular instinct shoes, to the comfort of a slipper and smothered it in a super sticky M50 toe rubber. If you ever wished your Instincts were softer and you're keen to try a slipper, then this is the shoe for you.

Bonus slipper beta: **By the time your mates are finished lacing up, you will have already flashed their proj!**

BOOT BANANAS ECO

Let's face it, your shoes stink! Don't bother denying it, I know... because mine stink too! Thankfully there's a new fruit-shaped, home-compostable, definitely not edible solution to our community's collective problem. The new Boot Bananas Eco model works the same as the old Boot Bananas do, but they're now filled with activated coconut charcoal that's sourced in Sri Lanka from coconut husks that would otherwise go to waste. They're genuinely eco-friendly, it's not just a name! So you can feel less bad about contributing to landfill and not have to worry about the people who have to smell your shoes.

Bonus: **Finally rid yourself of the cartoon-style wiggly odour lines hovering over your shoes post-climb.**

BLACK DIAMOND VAPOUR HELMET

Our favourite uber-light helmet just got lighter, more durable, and even cooler! Using a combination of magical foams and materials, BD has managed to drop the weight down to 155g, while still meeting UIAA standards for climbing/mountaineering — witchcraft! It also features an updated look with minimal straps and new headtorch clips. It's so damn light you'll forget it's on your head.

Bonus: There's still plenty of space for stickers – the real reason we always wear our helmets.

LA SPORTIVA SKWAMA VEGAN

If you've ever broken in a leather shoe, you'll know it's quite a journey, but usually worth it for the end result... Of course, why bother with the journey when you can just skip to the good part: Introducing the Skwama Vegan. Featuring La Sportiva's new SkinLike™ microfibre material, you get the same performance and sensitivity you're used to, without the leather (size appropriately) and with less impact than a shoe made with animal-derived materials.

Bonus slipper beta: That's a pretty badass paint job.

VICTORINOX

HUNTSMAN

FACE THE OUTDOORS WITH FUNCTIONALITY IN YOUR POCKET

When it's time to go offline, take your Huntsman with you. Offering 15 practical functions to cut, saw, screw and pick, it's the ultimate all-rounder.

FROM THE MAKERS OF THE ORIGINAL SWISS ARMY KNIFE™
ESTABLISHED 1884

FROM THE *Field*

TRIED & TESTED: ARC'TERYX NUCLEI FL

OVERVIEW

Pros:
- Lightweight (325g)
- Easy to carry on a harness
- Extremely weather resistant
- Insulation doesn't pack out

Cons:
- No double zipper/belay zip

Best for:
- Packable/rackable belay jacket
- Static belays in cold climates

From the ~~desk~~ crag bag of VL's resident Gear and Coffee Nerd (yes, that's what's in his email signature), comes this highly requested field review segment. Sule's passionate about demystifying the technology that underpins our favourite kit, all in the name of helping climbers spend their money on the best gear option for their goals –or on more food to keep dirtbags from dumpster diving dinner, we're not judging!

One downside of being a gear nerd is that the hardest part of leaving for any trip is the challenge of picking which of my many bits of gear to bring - oh the agony of choice! This is made slightly easier if there's even a slim chance of the weather getting chilly, because that means Arc'teryx Nuclei FL is probably coming with me.

First off it's important to state that this is *through and through*, a static piece. Meaning if you're standing still or hanging in a harness then it's guaranteed to keep you the perfect level of toasty while you're stationary, that's its bread and butter. However, if you're planning on using it in an active context such as bouldering, hiking (or god forbid walking the dog), only to complain about getting heinously sweaty, then you've missed the mark on what this jacket is for.

When deciding on which jacket to pack on a trip or spending your hard-earned dollarydoos on, the first thing to consider is its main purpose. In this case, I'm looking at the best option to keep me warm on long belays in cold temperatures, and if this was on the Arc'teryx Nuclei FL's job description, then its performance would make it a star employee. Honestly, it's so good at its job that I'm unsure if the Arc'teryx designers realised just how good of a jacket they were making.

The Nuclei is a synthetic jacket made from a more durable type of synthetic fibre insulation, making it far less likely to pack out and lose its ability to loft after a few seasons of shoving it into the included compression sack. This is the main thing that sets this jacket apart from other pretenders. Personally, I've had many other synthetic jackets over the years (with different fibre constructions) that seemed great at first, but slowly transformed into a pancake of disappointment after being compressed, an unfortunately relatable sentiment for many cold climate climbers.

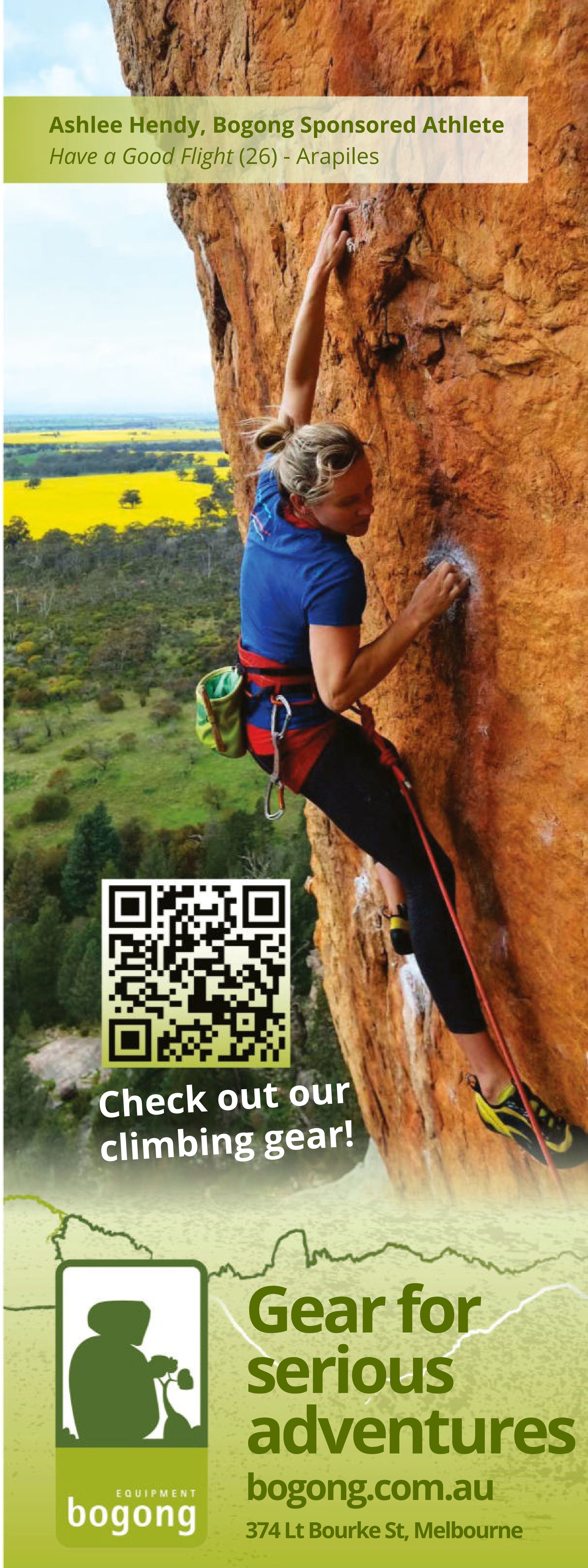
Synthetic jackets have an advantage in this context as they maintain warmth if it gets wet, which in my opinion is a non-issue in the case of the Nuclei FL considering this is the most water-resistant non-hardshell jacket I've ever worn. Seriously, this thing has no business being as water-resistant as it is – and that extends to its wind resistance too. I've worn it during multiple heavy downpours and never seen it wet out, even to the point that I stopped carrying a hardshell if I was taking my Nuclei with me. Its synthetic insulation also makes it a fairly warm layer. For reference, I'm usually quite content wearing my Nuclei over a sun hoodie and grid fleece during frigid, windy belays.

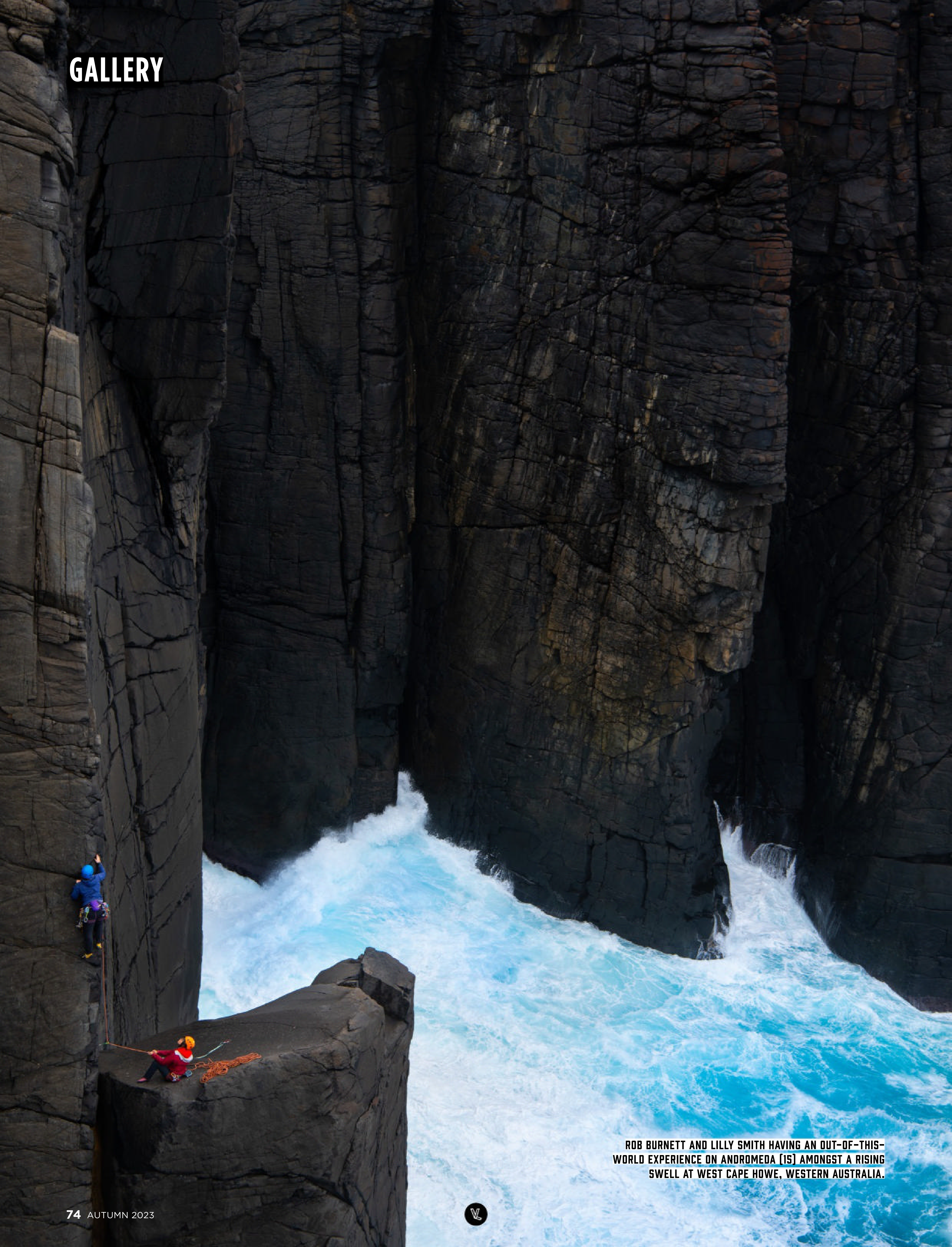
In terms of durability, it's pretty damn good for something with a 10D ripstop face fabric. Obviously, you wouldn't climb an offwidth in it, but after a few years of robust use, I'm yet to do any real damage. I've climbed a few offwidths with it clipped onto my harness and it's seen a few prickly shrub battles in Tassie, and haven't had a tear yet.

Shrubs aside, the place this jacket really shines is when it needs to be clipped onto a harness. This is the closest thing to a perfect midweight belay jacket I've ever owned. It packs small, doesn't weigh much, keeps the weather out and doesn't lose all its loft after you compress it. If you live somewhere where cold climbing is the norm, like Tassie, then you should probably own this jacket. I've owned it since before I was part of VL (yeap, bought it with my own golden doubloons!) and I'm sure I'll own it long after. So there you have it, a near-perfect bit of gear that undoubtedly holds a place in my gear closet hall of fame.

Overall, I'd rate it 4.5 out of 5 blue offsets.

I've pipped it by .5 because it doesn't have a double zipper for belaying. This may not bug everyone, but as my main belay jacket, it baffles me as to why they didn't add one... but if by chance any Arc'teryx designers are reading this, I'd gladly bump you up to the full 5 bars in exchange for a double zipper!


Ashlee Hendy, Bogong Sponsored Athlete
Have a Good Flight (26) - Arapiles
Check out our climbing gear!
EQUIPMENT
bogong
Gear for serious adventures
bogong.com.au
374 Lt Bourke St, Melbourne



ROB BURNETT AND LILLY SMITH HAVING AN OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD EXPERIENCE ON ANDROMEDA (15) AMONGST A RISING SWELL AT WEST CAPE HOWE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

ZAC LAZATIN ON MASTER BLASTER (24), BEN LOMOND, LUTRUWITA/TASMANIA.
SHOT BY SIMON BISHOFF.

AURELIA KING CAPTURED BY CAITLIN SCHOKKER, CLIMBING NAPPY NUGGETS TRAVERSE (V7) AT NOWRA'S LOT 33.

SIMPLY GOOD for the SOUL
BACK COUNTRY CUISINE
NASI GORENG
BACK COUNTRY CUISINE
BEEF TERIYAKI
BACK COUNTRY
CUISINE®
FREEZE DRI
backcountrycuisine.co.nz

Gado gado

(Satay salad)

Peanuts are a nutritional powerhouse. In their various guises, they can take on anything: a slice of toast, a good trail mix, or even a noodle salad. **But the king of all peanut recipes might just be peanut, aka satay, sauce.**

The problem with satay sauce, however, is that it's a pain to make. And if you're camping or living the #vanlife, forget about it. **Luckily there's a solution: stock up on dehydrated satay sauce blocks.** Available from the Indonesian aisle of your local Asian grocery store, they're about the size of a sardine tin, packed with flavour, and only take a few moments to rehydrate into a delectable sauce.

Satay tragic James Stuart gives you the low down on the perfect meal for that last day of the trip when all that's left are some limp carrots and a few eggs, floating in scungy esky water.

Got a recipe and a delicious tale you want to share? Email us at **team@verticallifemag.com**

Food plays a larger role than just fueling our bodies and driving performance—food is language. Through food, we share stories, emotions, and small bits of chalk (that's right, we know you didn't wash your hands ya filthy dirtbag). Food is also culture. For centuries people have passed stories between generations over bowls of soup (or in Coz' case, Gulyásleves)—not too dissimilar to climbers of yore sharing their tales of woah with young frothers over campfire delicacies in the Pines. So here o' hungry climbers, you'll find recipes and the stories behind them that bring climbers joy, and most importantly, that bring us together.

I spent a good portion of my mid-20s living off satay sauce on rice at my local Thai restaurant. And, yes, I was a bachelor. But then I met the love of my life. She introduced me to these amazing Indonesian satay sauce blocks that taste better than some restaurants' efforts.

The best part: they're non-perishable and dead easy to make (just add water). Throw one into your pantry box and fish it out when needed. They're so good, they're a regular feature on our family's mid-week dining menu. This Indonesian gado gado salad recipe is a winner both because of taste and its low impact on your dishwashing duties. And it's just as easy to use the sauce for a stir fry or a curry-style meal.

INGREDIENTS:

- **Hard vegetables to boil.** Use whatever's handy—beans and carrots are perfect but cabbage works too.
- **Whatever raw vegetables that have survived** to day four of your climbing trip—cucumbers and tomato, ideally. You only need a few slices per person.
- **200g satay sauce bloc**k (bumbu sate or bumbu gado gado)
- **8 eggs** (or substitute another protein of your choice)
- **1.5 - 2 cups rice**
- **Fresh chilli and coriander** to garnish (optional)

GEAR:

- **Stove and pot** to cook rice and boil vegetable
- **Knife** for chopping
- **Bowls** to serve
- **Utensils**

METHOD:

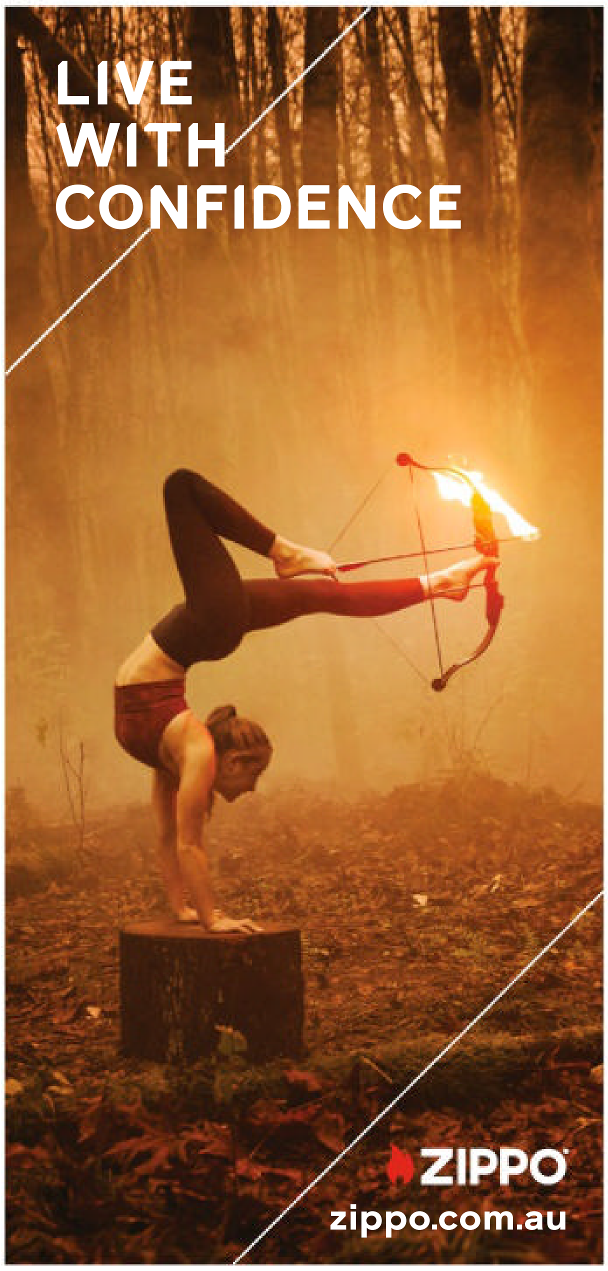
1. Hard boil the eggs. Peel when cool then chop into halves.
2. Slice hard vegetables into sticks of equal size. Chop any cabbage roughly. Slice raw vegetables. Chop up chilli and coriander.
3. Cook the rice according to your preferred recipe.
4. While the rice is cooking, boil about 1.5-2 litres of water (depending on how many hard vegetables you have).
5. Crumble the satay sauce block into a bowl (some brands will need to be cut up).
6. Reserve about 150-200ml of boiling water and then throw in hard vegetables (carrots first, then beans and finally cabbage). Cook until soft.
7. Slowly add 150ml boiling water to satay and whisk with a fork until it's a thick sauce. Add more water if desired.
8. Plate up the rice, hard vegetables and eggs then spoon on liberal amounts of satay sauce.
9. Garnish with raw vegetables, chilli and coriander.

BUMBU BETA

Bumbu Pecel
Spicy Salad Dressing
Rotary
Product of Indonesia
PT. Berkat Rasa Fajar

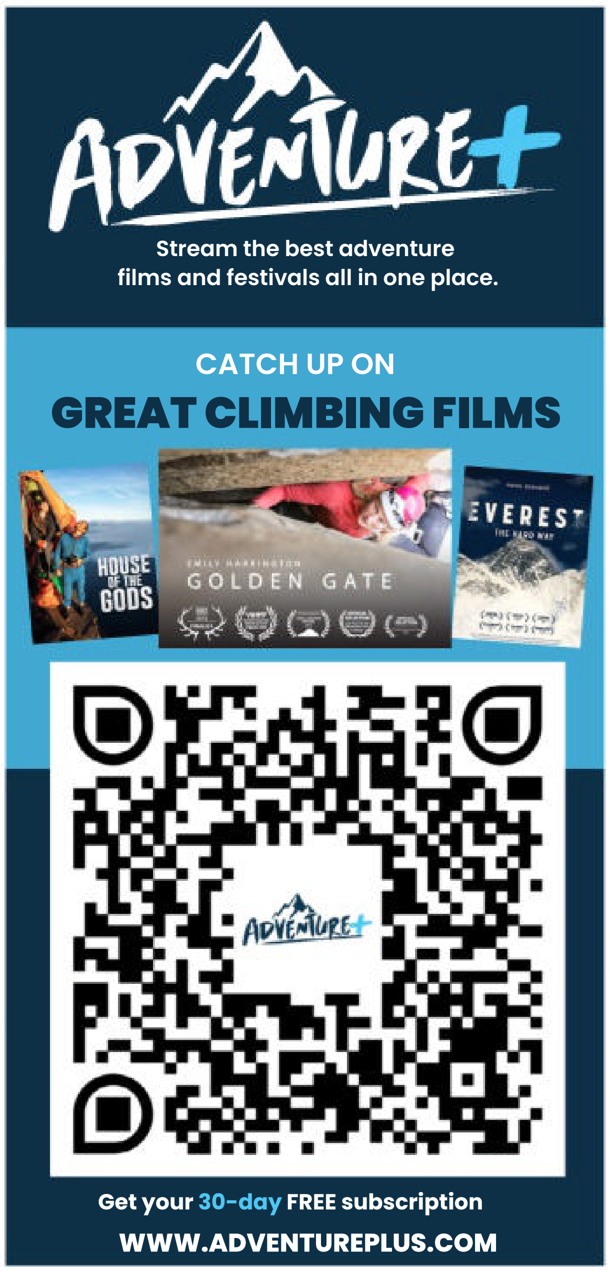
- As well as finding them at an Asian supermarket, you can also buy satay sauce blocks (or bumbu sate) online. Expect to pay $3 to $6 per block.
- There are many brands to choose from but the two I know best are:
  - *Enak Eco.* This is the most common. Choose either gado gado or any of the sate varieties. It's like a big block of peanut nougat
  - *Rotary*. My favourite but less common (you might need a specialist Indonesian grocery store). Take your pick between pecel (spicy), gado gado or sate. These ones crumble nicely and are easy to prepare.

DIRECTORY | We have introduced this new section to make space in Vertical Life for our community partners.



LIVE
WITH
CONFIDENCE

ZIPPO
zippo.com.au



ADVENTURE+

Stream the best adventure
films and festivals all in one place.

CATCH UP ON
GREAT CLIMBING FILMS

HOUSE OF THE GODS
GOLDEN GATE
EVEREST

Get your 30-day FREE subscription
WWW.ADVENTUREPLUS.COM

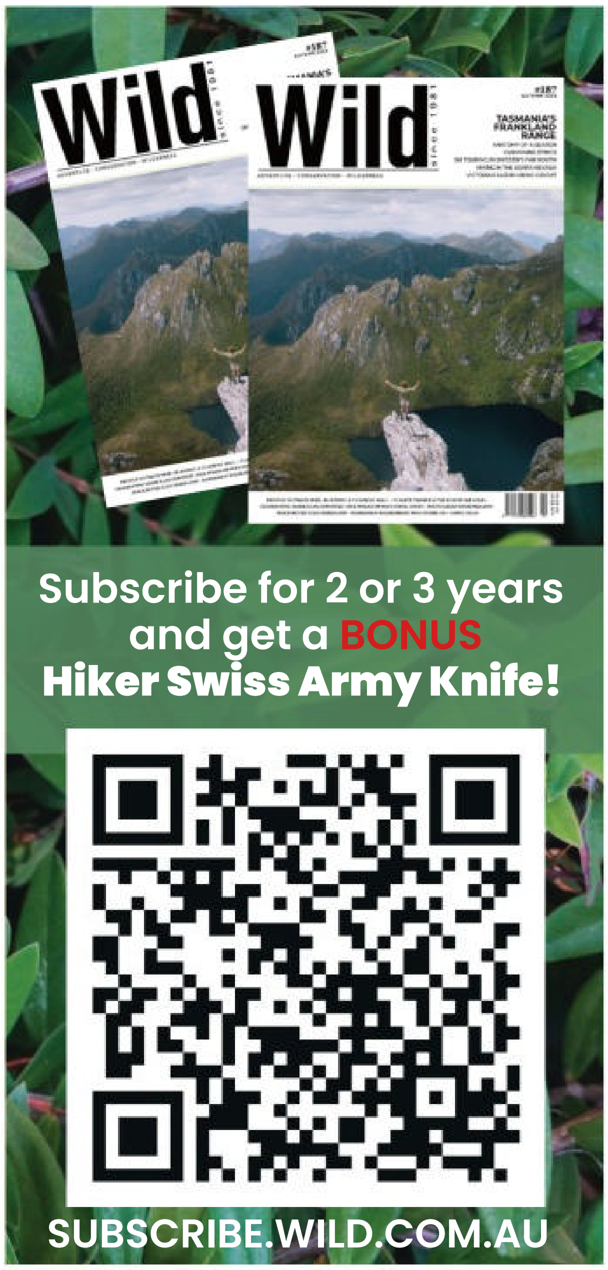
Explore
the Blue
Mountains
like never
before.

Wild.
Blue Mountains Guidebook.
Epic.
The Blue Mountains Guidebook.
#LOSTMTNS

Two Brand New
Guidebooks
Out Now.

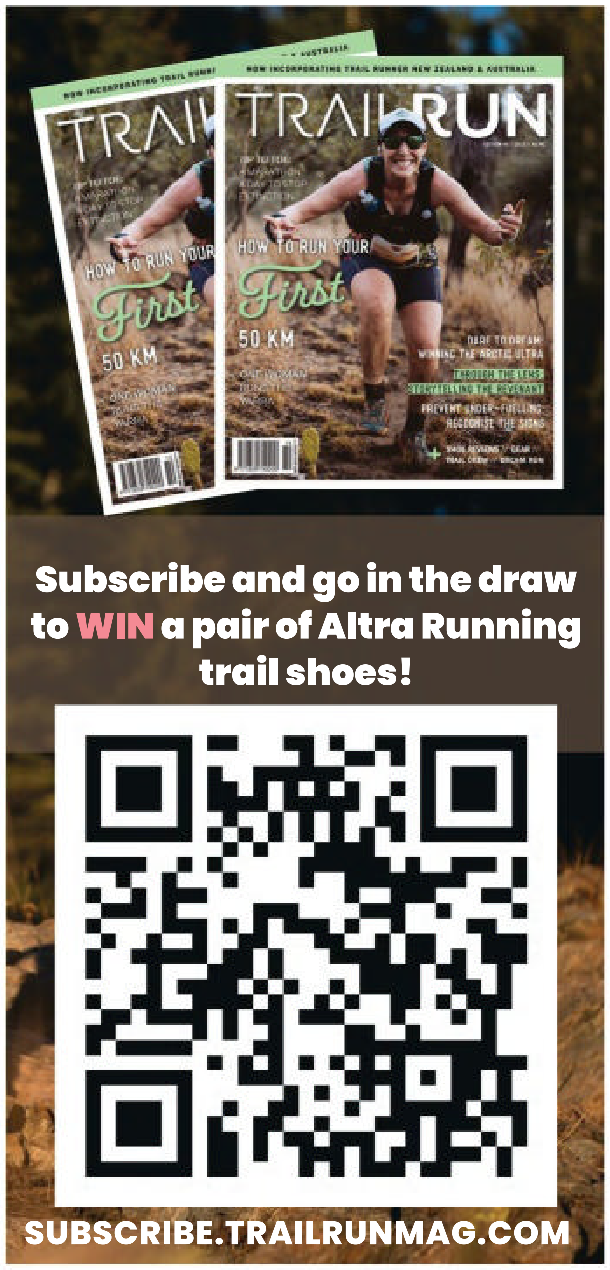
lostmtns.com

#LOSTMTNS



Subscribe for 2 or 3 years
and get a BONUS
Hiker Swiss Army Knife!

SUBSCRIBE.WILD.COM.AU



TRAILRUN
TRAILRUN
HOW TO RUN YOUR First 50 KM

Subscribe and go in the draw
to WIN a pair of Altra Running
trail shoes!

SUBSCRIBE.TRAILRUNMAG.COM

To book these contact: toby@adventureentertainment.com

A ‘LOW GRIT’ FRENCH PRESS/ PLUNGER RECIPE

Things not to
FUCK with...
1.
2. My COFFEE

Brewing coffee with a plunger is kind of like free soloing, people are always going on about how it’s “the purest form”, how it shouldn’t be rushed, and how some people do it naked in the moonlight... In any case, they may share a similar philosophy, but when it comes to the nitty and hopefully not so gritty, they’re pretty much the opposite. Unlike soloing, brewing a decent cup with a plunger takes barely any technique and is super duper hard to fuck up—plus if you do then you can just make another one.

- Sule (VL’s Resident Coffee & Gear Nerd)

A ‘LOW GRIT’ FRENCH PRESS/ PLUNGER RECIPE

BEST FOR:

- Purists
- Those without technique (unlike free soloing)

YOU’LL NEED:

- A plunger/French press
- 20g of decent coffee (ground medium-ish, similar texture to breadcrumbs)
- 1 or 2 spoons
- A timer
- Scales (Just buy one already!)

STEPS:

1. I like to use a ‘1 to 15’ ratio, so however much coffee you plan to use (say 20g) you should use 15 times more water (20g x 15= 300ml water).

   Note: Feel free to adjust this ratio higher or lower to match your taste (eg. lower is stronger 1:13 and higher is less concentrated 1:17)

2. Place your ground coffee in the plunger and add hot water. I’d recommend just off the boil, around 95°C. Go hotter for lighter roasts or cooler for darker roasts. Then let it sit for 4 minutes…Don’t touch it and definitely don’t stir it!
3. If you’ve got decent coffee then a “crust” should have formed. Break this crust with a few gentle stirs. Now use your 1 or 2 spoons to skim out the surface scum, similar to cooking lentils.
4. Crux: Let it sit for 5-10 minutes. Don’t rush deliciousness! This will also let the floaty bits settle.
5. Insert your plunger and gently push it until it’s just submerged under the surface of the coffee, but don’t push any further! If you push further then you’ll disrupt all the bits of coffee which just settled.
6. Gently pour yourself a cup

BETA:

This method works nicely with just about every plunger—even the shit ones. But to really elevate your French press game, I’d recommend buying one from a company called Espro.

They have a better mesh design and can be used with paper filters for the cleanest cup you’ve ever plunged.

They also make a handy integrated thermos model as seen in the picture (awesome sticker sold separately).

WEAK OR DILUTE?

- Grind finer
- Use a lower ratio like (more water or less coffee)
- Steep longer
- Use hotter water

TOO STRONG?

- Grind coarser
- Use a higher ratio like (less water or more coffee)
- Steep for less time
- Use cooler water

TOO GRITTY?

- You f#cked up. Start again!

SCARPA

SCARPA
SCARPA
VAPOR
SCARPA
SCARPA
VAPOR

VAPOR

VERSATILITY
ON THE EDGE.

VAPOR is designed to offer supportive edging with versatility aimed at more technical outdoor routes. Innovative technologies and materials make this shoe well-balanced, able to offer great performance in all climbing styles.

vibram XS EDGE

To locate your nearest stockist | T: 1300 784 266
sales@outdooragencies.com.au | www.outdooragencies.com.au

CLIMBING ANCHORS

climbinganchors.com.au
Store locations in Alexandria NSW & Fitzroy VIC

NEW BUTORA NARSHA SOFT

In stores from May 2023